THE PURPOSE OF THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF THE INDIGENOUS SUNRISE PROJECT TEAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST (USC) AND JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY (JCU) WAS TO SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOP THE PATHWAYS FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS TO MOVE FROM SCHOOLS TO UNIVERSITIES.

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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Team</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Messages</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Introduction</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Literature Review</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Research Approach</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Theme 1: JCU Indigenous Connections Program</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Theme 2: USC Headstart Program</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 Theme 3: USC School Talks and Liaison Visits</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 Theme 4: USC Alternative Entry Program and Tertiary Preparation Pathway</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 Theme 5: USC Indigenous Centre Proposal</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0 Theme 6: USC Indigenous Teacher Education Program</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 Theme 7: USC Indigenous Education Symposium</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0 Conclusion</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.0 References</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.0 Appendices</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of the collaborative efforts of the Indigenous Sunrise Project team at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and James Cook University (JCU) was to successfully develop the pathways for Indigenous students to move from schools to universities. To achieve such an end requires a considerable amount of Indigenous liaison and support efforts by the universities to clearly identify and develop measures to overcome the many barriers that exist for Indigenous people to access, participate in and succeed in higher education.

Both institutions are based in Queensland, which has one of the highest percentages of Indigenous people in Australia – 3.1% as compared to the national average of 2.1% (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2006). The anticipated increase in Indigenous school students (Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2008) has intensified the need for timely review as to the means through which these students can access university level education.

With many emergent pathway programs already in existence at USC and JCU, we sought to review and augment these. This was best achieved by exploring the contemporary motivations, barriers, enablers and aspirations of school students, staff and other stakeholders. Ultimately, enlarging the opportunities for Indigenous people to successfully complete a university degree provides a myriad of benefits to the Indigenous community and Australia as a whole. This project has advanced, albeit incrementally, this overarching goal.
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations’ (DEEWR) Bradley et al. (2008) Review of Australian Higher Education heralded a heightened focus upon social inclusion and the importance of increasing the access and outcomes of Indigenous people in Australia. This Indigenous Sunrise Project sought to consolidate the multiple pathway opportunities for students from school to university that were offered by the University of the Sunshine Coast and James Cook University.

The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), being Australia’s newest university, has an embryonic Indigenous Centre – the Buranga Centre – with underdeveloped pathways from school to university. A number of these emergent pathways such as the Headstart Program, School Talks and Liaison Visits and the Alternative Entry Program and Tertiary Preparation Pathway are the focus of this Indigenous Sunrise Project. Furthermore, the Indigenous Education Symposium and Indigenous Teacher Education Programs are included as their roles to support and supplement the USC pathways are apparent. Specifically, the Indigenous Education Symposium creates community awareness and the sharing of information about this project, the Buranga Centre and USC’s engagement with the Indigenous community as well as their commitment to improving Indigenous participation in higher education. The Indigenous Teacher Education Programs aim to improve the Indigenous education capability of pre-service teachers so that more effective education can be provided to Indigenous school students. Hence, has a particular bearing on this project. Finally, integral of the University’s efforts in the development of a proposed USC Indigenous Centre to advise, support and advocate for students before and during their higher education journey.

The focus of James Cook University (JCU) centres upon their Indigenous Connections Program which seeks to build the aspirations of Indigenous students in higher education. The Indigenous Connections Program seeks to recruit school students into the teacher education programs. The JCU project is novel for the institution in that its holistic approach seeks to engage students in practical activities rather than via orthodox passive formats where students listen to ‘content’ from speakers.

Overall, in the light of the Bradley Review (2008), the collective efforts of both institutions in building school to university pathways are particularly germane. These pathways and the associated mechanisms that underpin and supplement them are the focus of the Indigenous Sunrise Project team. Principally, the heart of our efforts is to palpably improve through practical measures the access, participation, retention and success of Indigenous Australians in higher education.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

In response the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council’s (IHEAC) 2006 report, the Federal Government provided two-year funding for School-to-University Pathways Projects. The goals of the projects were two-fold. The first goal was to build successful pathways for Indigenous secondary students; and secondly, to raise the level of Indigenous undergraduate enrolments in higher education. Facilitated by the EIDOS Institute, this Indigenous Sunrise Project – a collaboration between the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and James Cook University (JCU) – was among the nine (9) successful applications.

The Indigenous Sunrise Project pursues the objectives set out by the Government in the School-to-University Pathways Projects, being to:

- identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education;
- raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students; and
- identify best practice models which establish successful pathways.

The Indigenous Sunrise Project team developed a multi-pronged approach to achieving these objectives. Specifically, seven (7) themes were developed as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Indigenous Sunrise Project Themes
A brief summary of each theme, the stated goal and salient outcomes follows.

**Theme 1: JCU Indigenous Connections Program**

JCU has a long history of success in its Remote Area (now Community) Education Program (RATEP) which targets students from more remote Indigenous communities. However, demographic shifts in Indigenous populations away from remote communities into urban centres have not been reflected in increased participation rates of Indigenous students in internal, on-campus teacher education programs. Targeting local Indigenous students in Years 11 and 12 to participate in a residential university experience program, the goal of the JCU Indigenous Connections Program was:

To improve the participation of Indigenous secondary school students in urban areas in teacher education programs.

In terms of outcomes, whilst numbers of participants in the program were lower than envisaged (n=11) due to significant systemic barriers in schools, all of those who were able to participate in the program experienced positive outcomes. Indeed, five (5) participants are currently enrolled in Bachelor programs at JCU. Another outcome was that JCU has developed a range of evidence-led responses to target specific support and resources at both the university and school level that enable enrolment and retention of Indigenous students in university programs. Finally, this study provided clear evidence of the critical, and often unrecognised, role Indigenous education workers play in secondary schools in raising Indigenous students’ aspirations and supporting their transition to university study.

**Theme 2: USC Headstart Program**

Scholarships are provided for Indigenous Year 11 and Year 12 students to take part in this innovative program that gives students the opportunity to experience university life and to start studying towards degrees at USC. Commencing in 2003, the Headstart Program had attracted six (6) Indigenous secondary students who are guaranteed entry into most USC degrees upon successful completion of two courses in the Headstart program after obtaining a Queensland Senior Certificate. Furthermore, academic credit is provided for successfully completed courses. Thus, the goal of the Indigenous Sunrise Project was:

To increase enrolments and create a register of the Indigenous secondary school students participating in the USC Headstart Program.

In terms of outcomes, over the duration of this Project an additional nine (9) Indigenous secondary students have participated in the USC Headstart Program with around half of participating students achieving a Pass or higher per course. Importantly, four (4) students who participated in the program have since enrolled in Bachelor degrees across all Faculties at USC. The successes of the Indigenous student cohort are a reflection of the university-wide success of the USC Headstart Program which was nationally acclaimed with an Australian Learning and Teaching Council 2009 Citation ‘for enhancing Year 11 and 12 students’ development as individuals and as learners, through immersion in university courses across all Faculties’.

**Theme 3: USC School Talks and Liaison Visits**

With only occasional and ad hoc visits to schools by the Indigenous Services Officer prior to this Indigenous Sunrise Project, the need to develop a regular and more comprehensive program was a clear priority. This core pathway from schools to university was underdeveloped at USC limiting relationships with the schools and the dissemination of information to Indigenous students and their families. The goal of the School Talks and Liaison Visits aspect of the Indigenous Sunrise Project was:

To develop a regular, structured and strategic program of school talks and liaison activities that involve visits to up to 25 schools in the University’s geographic catchment area.

The key outcome was a total of 24 USC School Talks and Liaison Visits with information on university study presented directly to 557 Indigenous secondary students since the commencement of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. This intensified program of School Talks and Liaison Visits has seemingly contributed to the increase in USC Indigenous enrolments from 74 at the commencement of the Project and climbing to 100 students at the recent 2009 census date. Indeed, USC was awarded a 4-star rating by the Good Universities Guide for Indigenous participation in both 2009 and in the upcoming 2010 edition.
Theme 4: USC Alternative Entry Program and Tertiary Preparation Pathway
Both of these programs are important non-QTAC, direct entry points that allow for students to commence study at USC. While not the primary entry mechanism for secondary school leavers, their presence and functioning remains important as they provide accessibility for Indigenous school leavers unable to enter via merit-based mechanisms. Furthermore, they seek to improve academic skills and confidence in students that enable success. This being the case, the goal of the Indigenous Sunrise Project was:

To review and provide recommendations about improving the suitability of the USC Alternative Entry Program and the USC Tertiary Preparation Pathway entry options for Indigenous secondary school students.

Sixteen (16) recommendations were made by the Indigenous Sunrise Project, many of which have been actioned. Regarding the Tertiary Preparation Pathway, for example, new entry assessment is being developed, Indigenous content is embedded into three of the courses and an Indigenous course is now included in the suite of options for the program.

Theme 5: USC Indigenous Centre Proposal
The improvement of student pathways to tertiary education is partly dependent on the quality of the Indigenous support services. Thus, examining how the embryonic Buranga Centre at USC may evolve and be best organised was the impetus of the Sunrise Indigenous Project. Overall, the goal was:

To develop a model for an innovative and contemporary Indigenous Centre for consideration by the USC Vice-Chancellor.

A proposal was developed following a visioning process with key stakeholders, a review of Federal Government publications and a critical evaluation of nine (9) Indigenous Centres at Australian universities and four (4) international universities. A key part of the proposed USC Indigenous Centre’s was to build upon the success of the Buranga Centre which has an average Indigenous retention and success rate above the national average and since 2007 has a access rate of higher than that of the percentage of Indigenous persons in the Sunshine Coast region. Furthermore, since 2004 the Indigenous participation rate at USC has exceeded parity. The proposed USC Indigenous Centre developed by the Indigenous Sunrise Project will be recommended to the USC Indigenous Advisory Council which may then, in due course, progress the proposal to the USC Vice-Chancellor.

Theme 6: USC Indigenous Teacher Education Program
Primarily, this program focuses upon the development of pre-service teachers’ education programs and courses. The programs and courses aimed to improve the understanding and capability of teacher education students and teachers generally to provide more effective education to Indigenous school students. Thus, the stated goal was:

To increase the range of Indigenous Teacher Education programs and courses at USC.

Over the two year course of the Indigenous Sunrise Project undergraduate and postgraduate programs were conceptualised and shaped however, these were suspended in early 2009 due to changes in senior Faculty management. Nonetheless, an undergraduate course Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts remains in development, and is currently being reviewed to meet the recent Queensland College of Teachers Standards. It is anticipated that this course will continue through the necessary accreditation processes after the conclusion of this Project.

Theme 7: USC Indigenous Education Symposia
An annual symposium was proposed as a mechanism by which useful Indigenous education information could be shared with secondary school students and teachers, university students and staff and the community at large. The impetus for sharing information about Indigenous education was that it would bring about a shared understanding and raise the aspirations and confidence of Indigenous people in the region, including secondary school students, about university study. Accordingly, the goal of the USC Indigenous Education Symposium was:

To develop an annual symposium that raised awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitated an understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians.

The 2008 USC Indigenous Education Symposium was held from 17th – 19th September with Michele Hall, the NSW Director of Aboriginal Education
and Training, the keynote speaker. Attending the event was 120 secondary school students, university staff and students, local Indigenous services, Indigenous community members and Sunshine Coast community members in general. A survey was conducted and the six (6) resulting recommendations from the Indigenous Sunrise Project have informed the upcoming 2009 USC Indigenous Education Symposium scheduled now as a 4-day event from 12th – 15th October, 2009. The keynote address is to be given by Professor Yvonne Cadet-James. A confirmed 240 secondary school students are attending. Although demand from schools exceeded this number, it was necessary to cap the number of students – a palpable indication of the current success and likely future success of the USC Indigenous Education Symposium.

1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

Following an overarching literature review of Indigenous participation in Australian higher education, this Final Report is organised according to the seven (7) themes. For each theme, the background is detailed following which the activities undertaken are presented in terms of the three phases of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. Each phase is based upon the chronological sequence over the course of the two years of this Project, with details of the background, activities, issues, data, findings and recommendations as they unfolded. Given the diversity of the themes and the goals set for each, the three-phase structure creates a more lucid and richer picture of the efforts of the Indigenous Sunrise Project team.

As with much longitudinal social research, progression towards the set goal of each theme was not always linear with interruptions which took the form of internal factors within the institutions, external forces within the sector as well as simply unexpected impediments occurring at different points for the different themes. Hence, the report structure is such that it tells the story of the Indigenous Sunrise Project and the journey taken to achieve the aforementioned outcomes. At the conclusion of each theme, key achievements made are tabled against the three objectives set out by the Government for the School-to-University Pathway Projects.

Collectively, the seven (7) themes of the Indigenous Sunrise Project interconnect in a synergistic way, with their outcomes combining and overlapping in a manner whereby each increases the effectiveness of the other. The multi-themed approach of the Indigenous Sunrise Project brings to light a bigger, more comprehensive picture that discrete examination of the seven (7) themes may overlook. Rather than miss the broader ramifications, our multi-themed approach presents a fresh and more holistic perspective with the potential to more effectively improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous Australians.

This Final Report conveys the efforts, advances and outcomes made at both USC and JCU in the last two years. While these endeavours to improve Indigenous participation in higher education have been accelerated over the life of the Indigenous Sunrise Project, the pathways that have been augmented have permanency and, most importantly, will continue to evolve. As such, our pathway development is best viewed as in perpetuity with their success to be maintained through a proactive approach that adapts promptly to changes in Australian society and the higher education sector.

In summary, the Indigenous Sunrise Project, couched in the set Government objectives, has actively built, reviewed and improved successful pathways for Indigenous secondary students to university so as to raise the level of Indigenous undergraduate enrolments. Thus, it contributes to the overarching goals that frame the School-to-University Pathways Projects initiative and, ultimately, advantages the access, participation, retention and success Indigenous Australians in higher education.
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review was to provide an understanding of Indigenous participation in Australian higher education. To this end, the literature review establishes the contextually background for the Indigenous Sunrise Project and the rationale underpinning the selected seven (7) themes.

2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL

There are many individual benefits associated with completing tertiary education, such as the acquiring of skills and knowledge which in turn raises productivity, employability and hence earnings potential (Blöndal, Field and Girouard 2002). Seemingly less tangible, and often unseen by the individuals completing higher education studies, is the development of human capital as an outcome of higher education success. Human capital is vitally important in the economic growth of society (Blöndal, Field and Girouard 2002; Chatterji 1997) thus tertiary education is a critical pillar of human development worldwide. It provides the training essential for the myriad of personnel in society and it is these trained individuals’……who drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments, and make important decisions, which affect entire societies’ (The World Bank n.d.). Indeed, the long term failure to increase the rate of Indigenous Australians participation in higher education is illuminated as the efforts and investments directed at social inclusion in the higher education sectors of other nations have begun to reap positive outcomes (Bradley et al. 2008).

The importance of a tertiary education becomes even more significant for minority cultures since other issues, such as those associated with human rights and social justice, also affect those cultures (Irwin 1996). New Growth Theory supports the need for Indigenous people to achieve a tertiary education, as the increase in human capital will eventually close the gap between the poorer regions and richer regions of the world (Krugman 1991; Matusyama 1991; Romer 1990) and as seen above, human capital increases with increasing levels of education (Blöndal, Field and Girouard 2002). Therefore if Indigenous Australia is to grow economically and overcome inequalities created by cultural imperialism tertiary education is needed to develop the human capital to achieve it (Kemmis 1997; Schwab 1996). Higher education is central to the goals for the social, cultural and economic development of Indigenous Australia (HEAC 2008). The urgency of addressing under-representation of Indigenous Australians is prevalent in the recent Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley et al. 2008) which established a target of Indigenous student access to higher education to be at parity with the general population by 2020. Indeed, Bradley et al. (2008) suggest performance-based funding for universities on indicators such as participation, completion and progress rates for Indigenous students, adding weight to the investment in Indigenous Australia’s future.

Education has been a central function in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, with knowledge passed down from one generation to the next (ATSIC n.d). Historically there have been a number of stages in Aboriginal education as tabled by Powell (2006) beginning with the 1820’s mission schools established by churches and which signalled the end of traditional education for those who were forced to attend (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. n.d). Key turning points in Indigenous education in Australia include the 1967 National Referendum which saw Indigenous Australians assigned citizen rights including the right to education, the 1969 establishment of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme (ABSTUDY); the Whitlam governments 1972 creation of a Federal Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs and in the same year, the establishment of the Self-Determination Policy.

In 1975 Aboriginal Support Units emerged in TAFE Colleges and Universities and in 1977 the National Aboriginal Education Committee provided a voice for Indigenous People directly to the Commonwealth Government. In the following decade, the 1989 National Aboriginal Education Policy conferred that education was an empowering factor in the pursuit of Indigenous self-determination. In the 1990’s the Introduction of Indigenous Studies in schools, the National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the Stolen Generations Report and ABSTUDY Policy changes were all influential, shaping and driving the increased participation of Indigenous Australians in higher

Australia is one of the world’s most continuously liberal democracies and yet history shows us that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have only experienced the opportunities of full citizenship, including education, for the past forty years (Reynolds and Reynolds 1999). Aboriginal people themselves developed the 1989 National Aboriginal Education Policy which identified that education and employment are the two main empowering factors for Aboriginal people to achieve self determination and for Australia to achieve a more meaningful reconciliation (Reynolds and Reynolds 1999). Despite this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has been a highly contested issue for the last 25 years (McConaghy 2000) and Indigenous people have had little influence on the decision-making of their education issues, the result of which has been a mismatch of educational styles and behaviours (Thomas 1991; cited in Christensen and Lilley 1997). This mismatch is one reason for the current Indigenous education situation in Australia.

### 2.2 INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

The Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education highlighted the under-representation of Indigenous students in higher education as significant and necessitating policy intervention (Bradley et al. 2008). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students represented 1.0% (n=14321) of commencing university students in 2008 and comprised of less than one percent (n=9529) of all university enrolments in 2008 (DEEWR 2009). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are under-represented in degree courses and over represented in enabling or non-award courses within tertiary institutions in Australia (Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996; Schwab 1996). This coupled with the fact that attrition rates are higher among minority students (Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996) means that Indigenous Australia is already ‘behind the eight ball’ when it comes to completing higher education studies. Previous analysis of national data collected between 1999 and 2005 indicated that Indigenous student enrolments at tertiary institutions were declining (Healy 2005). While this data made it apparent that there is a need to reverse this declining trend, more recent statistics released in September 2009 show a more promising future for Indigenous Australians. Notably, Indigenous Access and Enabling Scholarships were introduced in 2008 and appear to have resulted in increasing Indigenous access and participation in 2008 (IHEAC 2008).

Indigenous higher education statistics for 2008 (DEEWR 2009) report record commencement numbers of Indigenous students up 7% on 2007 numbers. Indigenous student commencements in degree-level and postgraduate awards rose by 50.7% since 1997 with record postgraduate continuation numbers (up 6% on 2007 numbers and 182% on 1997 numbers). In terms of continuing Indigenous students, for degree-level awards continuing students were up 71.2% on 1997 numbers. Enrolment numbers were 1.7% higher than the previous year and the enrolment of Indigenous women between the ages of 18 to 59 years have tripled in 20 years. Indeed, a higher proportion of Indigenous women commenced university study (2.45%) than non-Indigenous men (2.26%) (DEEWR 2009). Of concern however is the gap between the percentage of Indigenous men between 18 to 59 years continuing study (2.90%) as compared to 6.23% of non-Indigenous males who are continuing study beyond first year in 2008. Continuing Indigenous women (18 to 59 years) represented 5.36% of total enrolments relative to continuing non-Indigenous women represented 8.27% (DEEWR 2009).

While the overall declining trend appears to have been arrested in the very short-term, this in no way detracts from the need to increase Indigenous participation and success beyond the first year in higher education. If anything, it creates an opportunity to capitalise on this upward momentum and further increase Indigenous success in higher education. Recent suggested targets by the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley et al. 2008) corroborate this perspective with a goal of parity access rates in proportion to the general population; success rates of at least 95% of the rate for non-Indigenous students; and retention and completion rates for at least 90% of the rate for non-
Indigenous students. Ultimately, this will advance Indigenous Australia.

2.3 THE DECISION TO GO TO UNIVERSITY

There are many factors that influence the decision to attend university in general. However, there is a paucity of research on the how Indigenous students approach higher education decisions. What is known, is that potential students need to be make the critical decisions (Bratti 2001; Soutar and Turner 2002; Veloutsou, Paton and Lewis 2005) being a) do I go to university?; b) which institution will I attend?; and c) which course will I complete? While gaps remain in the literature, studies have found that applicants in different groups tend to value different education attributes in their decision to attend university (Chapman 1986; Soutar and Turner 2002). For example, factors influencing a potential student’s decision to attend higher education are characteristics such as socio-economic status and academic aptitude, where the decision to attend is reduced for those with lower socio-economic status and lower academic aptitude (Veloutsou, Paton and Lewis 2005).

In determining the choice of path that is made by the student (that is in which order the three decisions are made) the majority of the research to date has focused on the overall behaviour of a university applicant and not on specific stages. Thus, not identifying in which order they are made (Veloutsou, Paton and Lewis 2005).

Despite extensive research into the higher education decisions, previous studies have mostly focused upon mainstream student participation, with little concern for how student sub-segments, such as mature age students and students from minority cultures, approach their higher education decisions (Harker, Slade and Harker 2001; Soutar and Turner 2002). It is intuitively sound to suggest that different student sub-segments will approach the decision to go to university with a different suite of criteria as they would value different attributes in their selection process (Chapman 1986; Soutar and Turner 2002). The literature suggests that there are two broad categories of factors that have contributed to Indigenous participation levels in Australia, being 1) policy/political factors, and 2) personal factors (AVCC 2005; Walker 2000).

Firstly, policy/political factors revolve mostly around income support as this has a principal bearing on Indigenous participation in Australian higher education (AVCC 2005; Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996; IHEAC 2008). This was best exemplified by the sudden and dramatic decline in Indigenous student enrolments into tertiary education at the turn of millennium due largely to changes made in ABSTUDY policy (AVCC 2005; NTEU 2003; NTEU 2005). A recent study by Universities Australia (2008) indicated that Indigenous people face a number of unique circumstances, distinct not only from mainstream Australians, but also different to persons from other low socio-economic backgrounds. This study found that financial factors impact participation, corroborating other research such as Bourke, Burden and Moore (1996) and Powell, Lawley and Raciti (2006).

It is known that 67.2% of Indigenous students received income support and this may take a variety of forms such as Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, unemployment benefits, pensions, cadetships or family parenting allowance (IHEAC 2008). Adding to this picture of Indigenous student finances is the Universities Australia (James et al. 2007) survey which indicated that Indigenous university students were more likely to be a sole parent, have children, have a disability, be over the age of 30 years and less likely to rely on parents or partners for financial assistance as compared to other students. In particular, Indigenous undergraduates worked 3 hours more per week on average that non-Indigenous student, were less likely to rely on cash assistance from other people and more part-time Indigenous students would prefer to study full-time (77%) if their financial circumstances allowed than non-Indigenous students (62%). Thus, income pressures, parental responsibilities, health issues and the necessity to support themselves has implications for the quality of learning (IHEAC 2008; James et al. 2007). Indeed, financial support systems for Indigenous Australians to participate in higher education need to be such that they provide adequate motivation to overcome the negative effects of social and economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous students (Walker 2000). Even so, the Review of Higher Education (Bradley et al. 2008, p.37) made no recommendations to adjust the current initiatives in place by the Australian Government to financial support Indigenous students.
Enabling programs are also canvassed under the policy/political factor theme. Enabling programs, such as the USC Tertiary Preparation Pathway, have been found to be an effective pathway to higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have the academic preparation to enrol directly in award courses (AVCC 2004). This being the case, the change in higher education policy to place less emphasis on enabling courses may have contributed to the decline in Indigenous student enrolments between 1999 and 2000 (AVCC 2005). Indeed, Farrington, DiGregorio and Page (1999) found that Indigenous students who completed enabling courses were more likely to enrol in and complete award courses. Thus, the presence and suitability of such pathways for Indigenous applicants is important. In 2008, 700 Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships and 210 Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Access Scholarships were made available to provide financial support for those undertaking an eligible higher education enabling program (DEEWR 2009).

Secondly, personal factors influence Indigenous student participation in Australia. McNerney and Sinclair (1992 cited in Walker 2000) found a positive relationship between an individual’s motivation and their successful participation in higher education. Their findings revealed that across cultures there exists a positive correlation between the level of self-confidence possessed by a student and their continuation of study. Motivation to attend university is dramatically affected by the cultural appropriateness of the institution (Lukabyo 1995). A campus not conducive to minority cultures, inappropriateness of curriculum, lack of Indigenous employment strategies and poor support structures for Indigenous students are some of the key factors that affect Indigenous students decision to attend university (Lukabyo 1995).

A study of Indigenous students studying at Western Australian universities found that other factors rated highly when influencing motivation and goals to be achieved in attending higher education, including receiving a qualification for existing skills, achieving personal goals of education or employment, supporting family financially, to be a positive role model to other Indigenous people, and to work for their community (Walker 2000). Similarly, Bourke, Burden and Moore (1996) identified an additional three key reasons in an Indigenous students’ choice to study, being 1) to get a better job, 2) to please their family, and 3) to meet community expectations.

One particularly reoccurring theme was the role of previous employment and current financial situation as factors contributing to an Indigenous persons’ decision to go to university (Bin-Sallik 1991; Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996; Farrington, DiGregorio and Page 1999; Walker 2000). This is a particularly heightened for mature age students who work to support a family and are more likely to consider the availability of evening classes when choosing to go to university (Soutar and Turner 2002). Farrington, DiGregorio and Page (1999) and Bourke, Burden and Moore (1996) identified that support from family affects an Indigenous persons decision to go to university. This too was found by Powell, Lawley and Raciti (2006) undertaken at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Walker (2000) advanced this point, finding that a factor affecting the decision to go to university for many Indigenous students was to support family financially and cater for the family responsibilities.

The presence of Indigenous support facilities also influence students’ choice of university. A study by Bin-Sallik (1991) found that around 40% of Indigenous students chose to attend a university because of the supportive environment provided as a result of the Indigenous service/centre. This finding has been corroborated in other studies too (see Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996 and Farrington, DiGregorio and Page 1999).

There are a range of other factors in the external environment which too influence Indigenous student’s participation rates in higher education. For example, issues of relocation, and adapting to a new environment (eg. transport and accommodation) affected students’ decision to go on to higher education (Bin-Sallik 1991; Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996; Sonn, Bishop and Humphries 1997). Racism and discrimination operating outside of the university was also identified in the literature as a salient factor (Walker 2000).
2.4 SYNTHESIS

Against this background the complexity of Indigenous participation in higher education becomes evident. Before a student can decide on which university or degree s/he would like to study, they must firstly make the decision to access higher education. It is how and why Indigenous secondary students choose to enter higher education that underpins this and all other School-to-University Pathways Projects commissioned by the Federal Government.

The under-representation of Indigenous higher education students are directly related to primary and secondary school education outcomes (IHEAC 2008). There is an apparent gap between the educational attainment of the Indigenous population and the non-Indigenous population, irrespective of variations between age groups and regions (IHEAC 2008). To exemplify, 2004 data indicated that 91% of non-Indigenous Year 7 students achieved the national reading benchmarks as compared to 71% of Indigenous students. Literacy benchmarks performance was similar, with only 52% of Indigenous students achieving the minimum standard as compared to 82% of non-Indigenous students (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2006).

The most revealing statistics of relevance to the Indigenous Sunrise Project are that of Indigenous secondary school student attrition. Indigenous secondary students are three times more likely to leave school between Year 10 and Year 11 and while the Year 12 retention rate of Indigenous students rose to 40%, this rate remains around half that of non-Indigenous students (ABS 2006). Data indicates that 90% of Indigenous young people are enrolled in secondary schools in Year 10, dropping to around 60% in Year 11 and 40% in Year 12. Relative to non-Indigenous student data (95% in Year 10; 85% in Year 11; and 75% in Year 12) the disparity becomes abundantly clear (IHEAC 2008). Needless to say, the potential pool of Indigenous secondary students who have completed Year 12 and with academic achievement appropriate for mainstream entry to university is small (IHEAC 2008).

Furthermore, this illuminates the need:

- To develop programs that connect directly with secondary school students to increase awareness of the options and possibilities that university study can bring (Theme 1: JCU Indigenous Connections Program; and Theme 3: USC School Talks and Liaison Visits).

- To encourage programs that provide a sample of an authentic university experience for secondary school students in Year 11 and Year 12 (Theme 2: USC Headstart Program).

- To ensure the availability and suitability of other direct-entry programs for secondary school leavers (Theme 4: USC Alternative Entry and Tertiary Preparation Pathway).

- The provision of university Indigenous Centres as a vehicle to engage and encourage participation in higher education in addition to the provision of academic skilling, access to health and community services, cultural affirmation, computer and resource access and a social network (Theme 5: USC Indigenous Centre Proposal).

- To develop pre-service teachers’ education programs and courses that will improve understanding and capability of teachers to provide more effective education to Indigenous school students (Theme 6: USC Indigenous Teacher Education Program).

- To organise forums that create a shared understanding of Indigenous education issues among university, community and secondary school students in a manner that builds aspirations (Theme 7: USC Indigenous Education Symposium).

This review of the literature contextualises the Indigenous Sunrise Project and provides a basis for the seven (7) themes.
3.0 RESEARCH APPROACH

Principally, the Indigenous Sunrise Project sought to increase the likelihood of university participation by Indigenous students at the conclusion of their secondary schooling in the localities where we operate. The Indigenous Sunrise Project was undertaken in our unique institutional and community settings of each locality, with the nuances and saliency of issues naturally differing for each context. Irrespective of this, we were always mindful of the wider implications and transferability of the outcomes of the Indigenous Sunrise Project to Indigenous education in Australia in general.

3.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

We identified seven (7) themes that would best facilitate our overarching agenda and adopted an action-oriented approach to undertaking the project. The preceding literature review created a concrete understanding of the complexity and status of post-school Indigenous participation in higher education and it is from this platform that we set about to develop practical solutions over the two-year timeframe of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. Thus, the research problem being addressed by both JCU and USC was articulated as:

RP: How and why Indigenous secondary students in Northern Queensland and on the Sunshine Coast do or do not engage in on-campus university programs.

The aims of the Indigenous Sunrise Project were two-fold.

Aim 1: To identify barriers and enablers to Indigenous student participation in higher education courses.

Aim 2: To document successful practices and strategies for raising the aspirations and confidence of secondary school students to continue to higher education.

In unpacking these aims, the Indigenous Sunrise Project via its multi-themed, dual-university structure set out to explore and gather insight about:

- The identified students’ perceptions of university study, teacher education and other university professional programs.

- The barriers and enablers to raising the aspirations, confidence and engagement of Indigenous secondary student in university study and teacher education programs in particular.

- The most effective processes to engage and encourage Indigenous secondary students into tertiary study and teacher education programs in particular.

- Ways in which findings from this study can contribute to broader knowledge about how and why Indigenous secondary students may or may not engage in tertiary study and especially in teacher education programs.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

This research was undertaken within a participatory research paradigm (or philosophy). Participatory inquiry focuses upon practical, living knowledge and involves self-reflective action and the active engagement of the researcher in the experience or process (Heron and Reason 1997; Lincoln and Guba 2000). Three approaches to participation include cooperative inquiry, participatory action research and action inquiry, all of which are focused upon experiential knowing (Reason 1994). For the Indigenous Sunrise Project, a case study approach to participatory action research was used.

The methodology, data collection methods and undertaking of activities to enhance pathways were selected to suit Indigenous students’ education needs as well as the associated aims and objectives for each university. Where data was collected, its purpose was descriptive and explanatory; using a case study approach to empirical inquiry into a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context (Yin, 1994). Thus, the study will consist of qualitative (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Shank, 2006) case studies across the various activity strands in the program, over the life of the program. Case study methodology is a suitable methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991). The study was multi-method in focus, thus involved an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2) in addition to the collection and review of some quantitative data.

3.2.1 Overview of Participants

There were a multitude of participants for this study. The participants in this study were the staff of the
universities and institutions associated with the project, such as the schools feeding to the universities, the Indigenous students, both from schools and universities and their communities. For different participants, data was collected in different ways. Prior to data collection, Human Ethics Approval was conferred.

3.2.1.1 District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) and regional education personnel
Identification of students in the Northern Queensland area occurred through liaison with District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) and regional education personnel and schools. JCU has existing strong networks with these partners and the new Queensland Certificate of Senior Schooling allows for the collaborative development of positive pathways into University study. In the Sunshine Coast area information was drawn through existing community and university-school links. Where appropriate, data was collected through field notes, meetings and systemic documents. Anecdotal data is also featured.

3.2.1.2 Students
Students’ perceptions of university study and teaching as a career at JCU were documented through the on-campus Indigenous Connections program. At both USC and JCU data relating to how students engage with the program activities were collected predominantly through discussions with Indigenous support staff about their perceptions of the program and how it could be strengthened for future years. It is important to note that school privacy and confidentiality policies did not permit the collection of secondary student names from schools or those in attendance at school talks or visiting on-campus. Furthermore, as secondary students are minors, parental consent was not always able to be secured particularly in situations where large numbers of students participated, for example, in the USC Indigenous Education Symposium. While this constrained the type and detail of the data collected directly from secondary school students, the university Indigenous Services Officers were effectual proxies. As university Indigenous Services Officers already have established trusting relationships with students and their parents they are in a valuable position to relay information and observations about students’ participation in higher education.

A survey of current university students’ perceptions also allowed the opportunity for anonymous comment and insight into the workings of, for example, the USC Alternative Entry Program. The surveys were developed on the basis of informal discussions and feedback given by stakeholders as well as the based upon the first-hand experiences of present and past Indigenous support staff. Survey data is crucial here because it is assumed that people will answer more openly and honestly when not asked to identify themselves in traceable ways (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Finally, enrolment data and university publications were a valuable source of information and in particular for determining trends and providing an important historical perspective.

3.2.1.3 Schools, Senior School Staff and Community Education Counsellors
The schools the students attend are an important source for data collection; as are the key senior staff and Indigenous Cultural Education Counsellors in the schools. Over the duration of the Project, informal discussion and interviews with the Indigenous Support Staff who liaise directly with the schools was conducted in addition to notes, enrolment information and formal reporting that is required. From this information, a progressive understanding of the fostering of relationships between the universities and the schools could be determined.

3.2.1.4 University staff
Finally, data will be collected within the universities from staff involved in the delivery of program activities as well as being involved in the program organisation. These were collected via informal discussions, i.e. unstructured interviews and notes recorded for analysis in terms of program improvement. At USC for example, a group interview (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000; Punch 1998) with the Indigenous Support Staff was selected as it bought together varied opinions, experiences and thus a range of perspectives. What’s more, as the USC Indigenous Services Officers have established trusting relationship with the students, their parents and the community at large, thus can convey and reveal trends, perceptions and enrolment behaviours at large. Similarly, the JCU program coordinator undertook informal discussion/ interviews with various program personnel and stakeholders.
3.2.2 Data treatment
The treatment of the data adheres to the Human Ethics Approval stipulations with data coded with no reference to names. Participants were assured of anonymity in data storage and in the Final Report.
4.0 THEME 1: JCU INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

4.1 BACKGROUND

The Indigenous Connections program at JCU aimed to improve the participation of Indigenous secondary school students in urban areas in teacher education programs. JCU has a long history of success in its Remote Area (now Community) Education Program (RATEP) which targets students from more remote Indigenous communities. However, demographic shifts in Indigenous populations away from remote communities into urban centres have not been reflected in increased participation rates of Indigenous students in internal, on-campus teacher education programs. This program sought to target local Indigenous students in Years 11 and 12 to participate in a residential university experience program. The program focussed on providing students with authentic experiences and interactions with key academic staff, support personnel and peers to give an authentic and supportive experience of what university and academic life might be like. The program is highly pertinent in light of the Bradley review into higher education (2008) which specifically recommends that universities need to focus on ‘the effectiveness of measures to improve higher education access and outcomes for Indigenous people’ (p.xxiii).

4.2 ACTIVITIES

4.2.1 Phase 1

In Phase 1 (2007) the Indigenous Connections program was conducted for the first time. Consultation with key stakeholders including regional District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) personnel, schools, teachers and families was conducted to identify ten willing and able students in Grades 11 and 12 from Cairns and Townsville schools to participate in the program. These students received personal invitations to participate in the program held on both campuses at James Cook University. The initial program involved students in:

a. Tours of the university campus introducing students to a range of facilities and services including student services, learning and teaching spaces, refectories and coffee shops, the library and sporting facilities

b. Discussions with academic staff about the types of education programs available

c. Discussions with current students about their experiences of university life and their reasons for wanting to become teachers

d. Discussions with the faculty marketing staff about career opportunities at home and abroad

e. Visits, where possible, to close-by education facilities like Unicare and the Australian Technical College to widen students’ knowledge of the multiple contexts in which teachers work

f. Sustained contact and liaison with the schools that participating students attend to ensure that students’ interests in teaching as a career are fostered

g. Mentor support for students as they prepare for university entry

h. Continued mentor support throughout the degree program for those who enrol.

i. Coverage of Indigenous support structures and services (e.g. Indigenous Library Liaison Officer, SIAS, NICP Officer, ITAS Officer).

Evaluation tools were put into place for focus group and individual feedback from participants, staff and schools to inform subsequent programs. The findings are organised in terms of the three Federal Government objectives for School-to-University Pathway Projects.

4.2.1.1 Findings for Objective 1

The strategy of individually targeting schools and likely participants and sending personal invitations did not result in the proposed uptake of twenty Indigenous students into the program, despite considerable efforts on the part of university staff. In some cases, the targeted students attended boarding schools and were given insufficient notice to plan attendance during the school vacation. In other cases, information simply was not distributed at the school level. Some very willing students were simply unable to attend the first program due to family commitments. The first program then proceeded in Cairns with just six participants.
4.2.1.2 Findings for Objective 2
Evaluations from the program included collecting a range of data as to the students’ perceptions of university before and after the program. These data suggested that although students perceived university as ‘different from school’, they did not articulate any specific knowledge of degree courses such as how many years they would take to complete a course or the attendant costs. The three major barriers identified in these data were: a fear of the workload; the level of literacy required to study at university; and the cost of attending university.

Post-program evaluation data revealed that participants enjoyed the program, had a much better understanding of university life, had built relationships with key personnel and peers and felt more confident in applying to university. In fact, 100% of students involved in the program enrolled into programs at James Cook University the following year (2008).

4.2.2 Phase 2
In Phase 2 of the program, data from the first residential program in 2007 were used to inform each objective. The 2008 program was extended to include a focus on Law as well as teacher education programs. It was thought that this strategy might generate interest from a broader audience given the increasing popularity of Law degrees with Indigenous students and the recent employment of two Indigenous staff in the School of Law who could support the program. As issues of timeliness and dissemination of information about the program had been identified in 2007, it was decided that the Program Coordinator would personally visit targeted schools and make direct contact with the students. The content of the residential program was also reviewed following feedback from participants and staff from 2007. Specific areas of concern identified by the 2007 participants were targeted in the 2008 program. Thus the 2008 program provided practical sessions on study skills; managing workload; timetabling; and academic writing skills. To address concerns about costs of university study identified in 2007, one session outlined various scholarships and cadetships available to students as an alternative to receiving ABSTUDY. The 2008 program was further enhanced by including activities which encouraged social participation and team building. Again evaluations were conducted to gauge the impact of the program against Objectives 2 and 3.

4.2.2.1 Findings for Objective 1
Whilst the direct contact with students approach generated interest at a school level, the overall uptake of the JCU Indigenous Connections program still only reached half the target number (five students as opposed to ten). The timing of the program continued to preclude the attendance of boarding students as the program, by its very nature had to be conducted in the school holidays. One school suggested that 2 programs might run in 2009 (one over a long weekend) in order that boarding students might be involved.

In addition, most schools only allowed the JCU staff member to speak to Indigenous students during non-academic time e.g. lunchtime when students may have other commitments such as sport. Post-program data suggested that information about the Indigenous Connections program was not systematically circulated within schools with participants relating that they only heard about the program via the Indigenous education worker (Community Education Counsellor) at the school or directly from the JCU staff member and never via the Principal or school Guidance Counsellor.

4.2.2.2 Findings for Objective 2
Post-program evaluation data showed that participants rated the program very highly. Two participants intended to come to university. Three participants responded that they would not have felt confident to apply for a place at university without the program. One participant believed that they would not be successful in their studies had they not attended the program. Clearly the program increased student confidence. The social participation and team-building activities were particularly well-received as well as the practical nature of the study skills program. Participants reported that designated careers and guidance officers in schools guided Indigenous students towards non-academic pathways relatively early in their schooling. This was confirmed by the Indigenous education workers (CECs) in schools who often did not have adequate information themselves about academic pathways for Indigenous students.
4.2.3 Phase 3
4.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 1
The Indigenous Connections program continues to be successful in the identification and support of Indigenous students, despite some systemic barriers. This research reveals that Indigenous students have to be very actively targeted to participate in such programs and that systems and processes at a school level often militate against encouraging and supporting Indigenous students into university study.

The success of the Indigenous Connections program at JCU cannot be measured simply in direct enrolments in university courses in the following year. Given the pre-program data collected from participants, it is clear that few Indigenous secondary school students have any information about university study prior to attending the Indigenous Connections program. A key measure of the programs’ success must also be the provision of sufficient information to enable participants to make informed decisions about their post-school options.

Clearly the Indigenous Connections program has had a range of impacts to support the transition of Secondary School students into university study.

Follow-up of the 2007 and 2008 Indigenous Connections participants showed that five participants from the 2007 program and one from the 2008 program enrolled at JCU. With regard to the remaining four participants from the 2008 program, two have undertaken a gap year and intend enrolling in 2010 and two have secured employment. Of the six students who did enrol at JCU, one decided to return to school to gain a higher Overall Position (OP) score as she was interested in studying medicine; and two have decided to defer enrolment until 2010. Furthermore, participants in the program contacted program staff directly for advice about how to defer or change their studies, showing the impact of the program in supporting Indigenous students’ choices.

A longitudinal element of the Indigenous Connections program is to provide mentoring and sustained contact with participants once they have enrolled at university. Interview data from current JCU students who had participated in the program in 2007 and 2008 revealed a range of specific benefits to them. They reported that they found it easier to establish networks and seek support. They were confident they could approach particular people for help and including peers with whom they had interacted in the program.

Program participants also expressed some specific areas of challenge principally: academic orientation and work; family commitments; and time management. The Australian literature relating to first year transitions to university study proposes that academic orientation and time management are common to first year students across Australia but this literature does not highlight the issue of family commitments per se and the findings from the Indigenous Sunrise Project may reflect a particular need for Indigenous students transitioning to university study: that of providing broader support and mentoring programs that include Indigenous parents and other family members.

Liaison with local high schools continues to be problematical in the identification of Indigenous students in Year 12 who could participate in the Indigenous Connections program. Data show that schools are not disseminating information about the program to all students, whether they are considering going to university or not. Furthermore, schools were often reluctant to give or organise suitable time for university staff to visit and disseminate information directly to students. A more systematic and coordinated approach is needed to identify aspiring Indigenous students to consider university as a post-school option. This finding supports the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council’s recommendations that universities must work together with schools, TAFE colleges and other registered training organisations to build pathways and actively support Indigenous students’ aspiration and transition to tertiary study.

4.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 2
Data in this study show that Indigenous students are generally guided into non-university pathways quite early in their high school years, often by the school Guidance Counsellors who provide career and post-school study advice. It generally falls to the Indigenous support staff (CECs) to encourage Indigenous students to consider alternatives to vocational pathways or to seek out current information about options that may be open to them.
Community Education Counsellors (CECs) are clearly pivotal conduits for information, organisation and support for Indigenous students in schools but have little, if any, formal training, to help students map academic pathways.

Given the emphasis on non-university pathways for Indigenous students provided by school Guidance Counsellors, data from this study suggest that Indigenous students need to be targeted much earlier in their high school years if they are to be able to consider university study as an option. The importance of partnerships between local secondary schools and the university is a key theme from the interview data. Participants in this study suggested that the pathways to university should be part of, rather than additional to, the school curriculum for all students. They also suggested that the program be targeted at much younger students, even primary school students so that Indigenous students are made aware early of the possible pathways they can take through secondary schooling. These participants reasoned that targeting the program at Year 12 students was already too late as their aspirations and subject choices were set in Years 9 or 10.

4.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 3
In this phase of the study, data provide insights into best practice models which establish successful pathways for Indigenous students into university study.

4.2.3.1.1 Identification and support of Indigenous students willing and able to make the transition to university study
Identification of Indigenous students needs to occur much earlier than Grade 12 as data show that many Indigenous secondary school students are guided into non-university pathways much earlier in their schooling. Craven et al.’s study (2005) reported that Indigenous students obtained advice from Indigenous education workers (CECs) and/or teachers before any other staff member. They also reported that Indigenous students were less inclined than their non-Indigenous peers to seek out the Career Advisor (Guidance Counsellor) for information about their options. Research into the Indigenous Connections program confirms Craven et al.’s (2005) study. The CECs in this inquiry were well aware of the lack of career advice or encouragement for Indigenous students to consider university study. One CEC participant went as far as to suggest that Indigenous students are systematically discouraged from aspiring to university study and consequently never see it as an option.

In this inquiry the importance of the CEC’s role was evident. CECs in local secondary schools are pivotal conduits for information, organisation and support of Indigenous students. The CECs were consistently identified by school administrators as the point of contact for the university when trying to arrange meetings at high schools to promote the Indigenous Connections program. All of the CECs responded with enthusiasm about Indigenous students being given information regarding university study and they organised the time and place for meetings to disseminate information about the program, arranged for permission forms to be sent home to parents, signed off and brought back to school and, due to their rapport with the Indigenous students in their schools, actively encouraged student attendance.

Craven et al.’s (2005) study also showed that Indigenous students generally preferred a holistic rather than compartmentalised approach to career counselling and guidance involving motivation, personal goal setting and reflection. The Indigenous Connections program took a holistic approach which engaged students in practical activities whether academically or socially-focussed and specifically oriented towards the course of intended enrolment. This aspect of program delivery was designed to encourage social participation and team bonding. Furthermore, these active practical sessions related directly to various courses of intended enrolment.

It was clear from the interviews with students that providing them with first hand experiences into some of the activities and experiencing the opportunity to interact with current university students benefited them much more than a program delivery of being passive recipients of information. Evidence suggests that having participated in the three-day Indigenous Connections program in 2008 has given participants both confidence and skills to successfully complete university study.
4.3 OUTCOMES

The key outcomes of this Final Project Report into the Indigenous Connections project at JCU are three-fold.

Firstly, the Indigenous Connections program at JCU is a demonstrably successful pathways program to both encourage enrolment and support retention in university courses. Whilst numbers of participants in the program were lower than envisaged due to significant systemic barriers in schools, all of those who were able to participate in the program experienced positive outcomes. JCU now has a robust and engaging transition program for Indigenous students that is successful and, with ongoing institutional support, sustainable.

Secondly, JCU has developed of a range of evidence-led responses to target specific support and resources at both the university and school level that enable enrolment and retention of Indigenous students in university programs. Qualitative data gained from participants in the program at every level point to clear, resource-effective strategies to encourage Indigenous student participation in successful university study.

Finally, systemic barriers to Indigenous student participation in university education have been identified and feasible solutions proposed. This study has provided clear evidence of the critical, and often unrecognised, role Indigenous education workers (CECs) play in secondary schools in raising Indigenous students’ aspirations and supporting their transition to university study. JCU intends to hold a symposium for University staff, Principals, Guidance Counsellors and CECs across the region to disseminate findings from this study to better inform all stakeholders as to the best ways to encourage and support Indigenous students.
### Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:
*To increase enrolments and retention in teacher education programs at JCU*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pathway Goals</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
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| Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education | ✷ Indigenous students specifically identified and targeted  
✷ School and Liaison Visits by JCU Indigenous staff.  
✷ Direct relationships with Indigenous education workers (CECs) in schools.  
✷ Ongoing mentoring and support for participants in the Indigenous Connections program to demystify university study.  
✷ Developing a holistic program that focuses on academic and social participation.  
✷ Collecting data from participants and stakeholders to inform program and targeted support  
✷ Providing ongoing mentoring and support for program participants in their university studies  
✷ Identification of barriers to participation in university study for Indigenous students  
✷ Disseminating research findings to university staff, Principals, Guidance Counsellors and Community Education Counsellors as to the barriers to participation in university study. |
| Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students | ✷ Specific targeting of students early in their secondary schooling  
✷ A holistic approach that includes a focus on academic and social participation.  
✷ Professional Development and support for CECs and other school and university staff in successful practice to encourage Indigenous participation in university study.  
✷ Ongoing mentoring and support |
| Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways | ✷ |
5.0 THEME 2: USC HEADSTART PROGRAM

5.1 BACKGROUND

The Indigenous Sunrise Project team sought to extend and improve the participation of Indigenous secondary school students in the USC Headstart Program. The USC Headstart Program provides students who will be in Years 11 and 12 the opportunity to experience university life and to start studying towards degrees at USC. It offers students an authentic pre-taste of lectures, tutorials and laboratory work and helps overcome some of the problems that first-year university students experience. It also provides guaranteed entry into a USC degree if students successfully complete two courses within the Headstart program and obtain a Senior Certificate.

The USC Headstart Program is important to the Indigenous Sunrise Project for a number of reasons. Indigenous Australians are educationally disadvantaged starting from the earliest years of school and across all educational sectors including higher education (IHEAC 2007). The access rate for Indigenous Australians has been less than optimal, and undergraduate enrolments have been largely in the fields of education, health and society and culture. Consequently, low rates of enrolment in science, technology, engineering and architecture are reported nationally (IHEAC 2007). Drawing from this national perspective, it can be seen that the USC Headstart Program is closely aligned with Recommendation 4 in the James et al. (2008) ‘Participation and Equity’ report for Universities Australia which calls for a concerted action to address the under-representation of Indigenous people as the USC Headstart Program represents a rigorous mechanism to increase Indigenous undergraduate enrolment.

Since commencing in 2003, a total of 441 students from 36 regional schools have successfully completed at least one Headstart course each with approximately 41% subsequently enrolling in USC degrees (USC Annual Report 2009). Predominantly female secondary school students have participated (65%) and close to half were the first in their family to undertake university study (44%). High academic performance is generally achieved – High Distinctions 9%; Distinctions 20%; Credits 27% and Passes 28% - with around 13% Fail grades reported (USC Annual Report 2009). With limited places, student successes and the growing interest from the community, it is becoming a popular and proven pathway for entry to USC. At the commencement of the Indigenous Sunrise Project in 2007, USC provided up to three (3) scholarships per semester for Indigenous students enrolled in the Headstart Program. Thus, as a proven pathway that is directed at secondary students. The Indigenous Sunrise Project it was established that the goal was to:

To increase enrolments and create a register of the Indigenous secondary school students participating in the USC Headstart Program.

5.2 ACTIVITIES

The Indigenous Sunrise Project team sought to extend and improve the participation of Indigenous secondary school students in the USC Headstart Program.

5.2.1 Phase 1

In Phase 1, the objectives of the Indigenous Sunrise Project were fleshed out. The Indigenous Sunrise Project team thus set out to establish a committee of university staff who have an interest in the project, in addition to Buranga Centre staff. The resultant committee of five (5) includes a Pathways project team member, academic staff, APT staff and an administrative assistant. While initially it was anticipated that this committee would serve a broader role in the Project, in actuality their assistance was limited to the development of objectives. Key objectives developed in Phase 1 included:

- **Objective 1**: To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the Headstart Program at USC and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the Headstart Program at USC and identify areas where it required tailoring for Indigenous secondary students.

- **Objective 2**: To develop a register of key information about previous and current Indigenous Headstart students in terms of the number, which schools they came from, the choice of course, their completion of the course and their choices for university study at USC following their Headstart experience. Thus, mapping of the pathways taken through existing programs.
**Objective 3:** To seek an opportunity for Buranga Centre staff to have representation on the Headstart Program committee, so as to review and advise as to the cultural and contextual appropriateness of the program for the Indigenous students.

**Objective 4:** Disseminate USC Headstart information directly to secondary school students and their families in the Sunshine Coast locality so as to build upon the current success achieved by the existing program.

Having established the objectives, the Indigenous Sunrise Project then pursued Objective 1 and Objective 2 during this first phase.

### 5.2.1.1 Findings for Objective 1

From the outset it was apparent that access to enrolment information was going to impede the progress of addressing Theme 2 of the Project. Data captured by the previous Buranga Centre staff was incomplete and data sharing from the internal enrolment system problematic. Eventually access was gained to internal enrolment records. This data showed that from the 2004 to 2008 a total of 10 Indigenous secondary students have participated in the USC Headstart Program.

The USC Headstart Program allowed students to complete a maximum of two semesters of study across Years 11 and 12. Students who participate in this program are guaranteed entry into most USC degrees upon successfully completion of two courses within the Headstart program, and after obtaining a Queensland Senior Certificate or Queensland Certificate of Education from their school. Further benefits are that, it provides academic credit towards related USC degrees, saving both time and money.

Students can only complete one course each semester and have access to:

- library services, both on and off campus
- computer laboratories
- intranet, internet and email services, both on and off campus
- course counselling and personal counselling
- career and employment services
- orientation week activities
- sporting and social activities

The University provides information sessions for students, teachers and parents, which outline program requirements, the costs involved and the scholarships available for Headstart applicants. Furthermore, documents clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of all participants – the University, the School and the Student. Scholarships valued at $375 each are mostly provided by the Kirk Foundation with two USC scholarships for Indigenous students. USC strongly encourages students to apply for the Indigenous specific scholarship. The Buranga Centre has little involvement in the administration of the Headstart Program. This involvement was generally related to notification of the Indigenous student applicant so that the scholarship could be awarded. However, with the 2008 commencement of an Indigenous Services Officer – a newly created position – there was an opportunity for greater involvement by the Buranga Centre.

### 5.2.1.2 Findings for Objective 2

Initial investigations sought to establish a general understanding of the preferences and choices made by the 10 Indigenous Headstart students. For example, information about which Faculty’s they had enrolled in, which courses did they undertake, did any student participate in more than one semester and did they continue on to enrol at USC was of interest. In seeking this general information, the issue of information access and sharing between the Buranga Centre staff and the Headstart Program staff became apparent. Additionally, many key aspects of these student enrolment issues were not recorded or monitored and as such it is unknown if they made contact with or knew of the Buranga Centre. The academic outcomes of the students were known only to Headstart Program staff and data generated by Student Records provided little indication of the Indigenous Headstart students’ experiences. It is unknown which schools these students were from and if their decision to participate was influenced by the ad hoc USC School Talks and Liaison Visits undertaken by the Buranga Centre. Determining these many unknowns and gaining access to information were the focus of the Indigenous Sunrise Project.

At the conclusion of Phase 1, it was identified that information access and information sharing regarding
the Indigenous Headstart students were obstacles to overcome. To date, incomplete records kept by the Buranga Centre made it difficult to track and monitor the previous Indigenous secondary students that had undertaken the USC Headstart Program.

5.2.2 Phase 2
5.2.2.1 Findings for Objective 2
Efforts continued to be directed at Objective 2 in this phase. Following on from Phase 1, the Indigenous Sunrise Project team held three intensive discussion sessions to address the issues and goals surrounding the Headstart Program. As a result of these discussions, it became evident that the first step was to access and explore the data regarding these past students. As noted in Phase 1, accessing such information was problematic, however, in the interim the team were able to successfully secure data from the internal records systems and analysis of this data provides a more lucid picture as to issues surrounding Indigenous participation in the USC Headstart Program. Such information would provide a platform upon which the program can be more effectively assessed and, in turn, produce more effective measures and interventions.

Given the necessity to secure and review the data of the past Indigenous Headstart students, other aspects of the project were deferred to Phase 3. Importantly, in this phase discussions with the key staff in the relevant departments across the university showed fruitful beginnings with a palpable keenness to support the Project’s objectives.

5.2.2.1.1 Findings for Objective 3
During this Phase 2, carriage of the USC Headstart Program and its administration was under review with the possibility of being re-homed or responsibilities split between different divisions within the University.

5.2.2.1 Findings for Objective 4
Information about the USC Headstart Program was included in the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits thus directly providing information to secondary students, their parents and key school personnel.

5.2.3 Phase 3
5.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 2
With access to internal records, analysis of the data regarding past and current 2009 Headstart students was undertaken in Phase 3. From the data, it was found that currently in its sixth year, the Headstart program at the University of the Sunshine Coast has attracted a total of 17 Indigenous students from 2004 to 2009. In 2009, the greatest participation success was achieved with a five (5) Indigenous students enrolling in the Headstart program in Semester 1. This spike in 2009 enrolments is testimony to the intensive communication and information provided via the Murri Pathways school talks program (Theme 3) and in particular the liaison work of the Buranga Centre staff. Also, in part, growing word-of-mouth about the program in the community can account for the increasing number of enrolments.

Having secured data pertaining to Headstart student enrolment a more lucid picture of Indigenous participation, choices and outcomes could be established. Examination of the USC Indigenous Headstart profile and comparing and contrasting with previous years was able to determine the achievements of the program. The findings demonstrate a growing success in attracting students to the program and articulation to Bachelor degrees across all three Faculties’ at USC (see Appendix 1).

In authenticating the said goal and second objective, the section presents the findings two-fold. Firstly, information pertaining to the mapping of Indigenous students Headstart choices is presented. Secondly, this section will address systems to contact and mentor Indigenous students upon commencement and during their Headstart experience.

5.2.3.1.1 Mapping of Indigenous students Headstart choices
A detailed profile of the participation and success of the USC Indigenous Headstart program from 2004–2009 is presented in Appendix 1. This information had not previously been accessed, compiled or assessed. Building upon the platform, the following mapping information achieves the aforementioned goal of the Indigenous Sunrise Project.

- Five (5) Indigenous students commenced in Semester 1, 2009 and four (4) students in Semester 2, 2009. This is a particularly successful outcome when compared to the nil student enrolments experienced in Semester 2, 2008.
which was disappointing as non-Indigenous enrolments in USC Headstart totalled 138 students in 2008 (USC Annual Report 2009). Furthermore, this is the largest intake of students in any one semester (Semester 1, 2009) since the commencement of the program. With nine (9) students enrolling in 2009 is almost equal to the 10 student enrolments experienced in the previous five years collectively. Participation had previously remained stable at 1 to 2 students per semester. Further highlighting the magnitude of the 2009 enrolments.

- Of these nine (9) students, two (2) are undertaking a second course. The Headstart program allows a maximum of two courses to be undertaken by students. This too is a positive metric as past data indicated that four (4) of the 10 students who had participated in the program had continued on to a second semester. Three (3) of these students went on to enrol in Bachelor degrees at USC. That is, undertaking two (2) Headstart semesters appears to lead to subsequent enrolment at USC.

- There have been limits on the number of available Headstart scholarships in the past; however, as enrolments never exceeded three (3) there was always adequate scholarships available. Even though Indigenous Headstart enrolments exceeded the number of scholarships, all nine (9) students in 2009 were awarded scholarships to assist them with their study, further demonstrating the concrete commitment by USC to advance the participation of Indigenous students in higher education. USC Headstart Indigenous Scholarships were provided by USC Students Services and Headstart Encouragement Foundation Scholarships were also provided by the University in Semester 2, 2009.

- Headstart enrolments have been across all Faculties since 2003. Of all the courses undertaken 56.5% were from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 39.1% from the Faculty of Science, Health and Education and 4.3% from the Faculty of Business. It is important to a pause at this juncture as these enrolments are unlike the national data in that such a large proportion of the Indigenous Headstart students undertake course in the field of science. Closer examination of the enrolment data reveals the following ‘pure’ science courses were selected: chemistry, cell biology, anatomy, and bioscience. Furthermore, the course Environment, Technology and Sustainability, a core course offered at USC, has been a popular selection. Despite the over half of the USC Headstart enrolments being in the fields of society and culture (USC Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) the fact remains that 39.1% of enrolments were in science related fields, which bucks the historical national trends reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2006).

- Courses selected in the 2009 intake included one (1) student is enrolled in Introductory Biology; two (2) in the Environment, Technology and Sustainability course, one (1) in Chemistry; one (1) in Indonesian A/B, one (1) in Communication and Thought and one (1) in Introduction to Creative Writing.

- Commencing Semester 1, 2009 one (1) Indigenous Headstart student enrolled in a Bachelor of Paramedic Science. Thus, a total to date of 40% of the Indigenous Headstart students (four from the 10 enrolled 2004–2008) have subsequently enrolled to a Bachelors degree at USC. A notable success.

- Presently in Semester 2, 2009, one (1) student is enrolled in the Faculty of Business, one (1) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and two (2) in the Faculty of Science, Health and Education. The three (3) students who commenced their undergraduate degrees prior to 2009 remain enrolled in their studies; hence none have dropped out and their persistence at their degree is too, in part, a reflection of the success of the Headstart program in readying students for their degree courses. Furthermore, it strengthens the apparent correlation between the completion of two (2) Headstart courses and degree enrolment, degree persistence and hopefully, completion.

The 2004 – 2008 Headstart data was considered the benchmark against which to compare all future enrolments and academic outcomes of participating students. Consequently, the 2004 – 2008 data established that 57% of Indigenous Headstart students will achieve a Pass or higher per course.
In detail, of the 10 students who enrolled in 14 courses from 2004 – 2008 the following grades were awarded: 4 Distinctions; 1 Credit; 3 Passes; 3 Fails; 2 Withdrawn Fails (discontinued after the HECS cut-off date); and 1 Withdrawn (discontinued before the HECS cut-off date).

Unfortunately in Semester 1, 2009 only two (2) of the five (5) commencing students successfully competed their course; accounting for 40% of the enrolment. Compared to the 2004 – 2008 point of reference being that 57% would achieve a Pass or higher per course, this indicates a downward trend. Closer investigation revealed that these three (3) students had a wide range of extracurricular activities, such as representative athletics training and additional school subjects which in addition to travel and incompatible timetabling with their school curriculum, made undertaking Headstart logistically difficult. As such, all three students indicated that they enjoyed the limited experience of the Headstart Program, but their immediate priority was to completion of secondary school and as such withdrew from the Headstart program. To illustrate, one student travelled 1 hour by bus to the USC Campus, attended 3 hours of classes on campus, and then returned to home by bus.

Furthermore, this student could take advantage of 2 hours of weekly ITAS tutoring. As this student’s USC class timetable was incompatible with the school’s allowable ‘flex day’, the logistics of undertaking the Headstart program became irreconcilable.

As a part of reflective practice by the Buranga Centre, changes to the presentation slides that highlight the non-monetary costs such as travel time, timetabling and balance with other commitments are important to consider prior to Headstart enrolment. In addition, the Buranga Centre are also exploring the possibility of providing additional financial support for travel and textbooks. Nonetheless, the decision to withdraw was not a reflection of the USC Headstart Program but rather the matching with school timetables and other commitments.

Finally, in 2009 the schools from which the Indigenous Headstart students came were also recorded, being:

- Beerwah State High School (n=2)
- Chancellor State College (n=1)
- Maroochydore State High School (n=1)
- St Columban’s College (n=1)
- Mathew Flinders Anglican College (n=1)
- Noosa District State High School (n=1)
- Tullawong State High School (n=2)

All that can be deducted at present is the diversity of schools from which the Headstart students came from. The Murri Pathways School Talks and Liaison Visits (see Theme 3) of which USC is a part, was conducted and four (4) of the seven (7) schools from which these incoming students heralded. Thus, there is a crude correlation between the dissemination of Headstart Information by the Buranga Centre. Notably, the USC School Liaison Officer visited many of the other schools also sharing information about USC’s Headstart Program. No trends could be found in terms of those students who withdrew in Semester 1, 2009 and the above school data.

While little can be deducted at present, now that this metric is a part of the mapping process future trends can provide insight into the appeal of Headstart at various schools, the success of students from various schools. Such information, for example, can inform the USC School Liaison Officer visited many of the other schools also sharing information about USC’s Headstart Program.

5.2.3.1.2 Systems to contact and mentor Indigenous Headstart students

There are two systems of contact and monitoring in place – that conducted by the Buranga Centre and that undertaken by the University that then is fed back to the Buranga Centre.

Firstly, Indigenous Headstart students engage in regular contact with the Buranga Centre in the form of weekly tutoring services as a part of the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) conducted at the Centre to assist students with their assessment and studies. Other support services that are provided by the Buranga Centre are frequently accessed by the enrolled Headstart students (e.g. computer access, financial assistance, and general pastoral care). Buranga Centre staff members
also maintain close links with the high schools which is advantageous as it creates a collaborative environment with the student at the centre of this nexus. Collectively, these systems of contact and interaction with students ensure the building of strong relationship with the student not only upon commencement but for the duration of their Headstart semester. Buranga Centre staff aim to engage in regular contact with all students at all stages of their degree as a mechanism to enhance the experience and academic success of USC’s Indigenous students.

The second contact system is undertaken by the USC with a direct feedback mechanism to the Buranga Centre. Specifically, the University employs a staff member in the Student Services Division who exclusively monitors the progress of Headstart students. This staff member contacts course coordinators at the commencement of the semester, periodically throughout the semester and where necessary, at the completion of the semester seeking progress reports or updates on all Headstart students, including Indigenous students. This information, if pertaining to Indigenous Headstart students is, in turn, passed on to the Buranga Centre so that staff may intervene if there is concern about a student. The successes of the Headstart program attest to the value and effective functioning of these systems of contact.

5.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 3
The Indigenous Services Officer advised that no issues or complaints about the Headstart Program and its administration had been formally lodged or informally discussed among students. What’s more, the Headstart Program team at USC won an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Citation in 2009 ‘For enhancing Year 11 and 12 students’ development as individuals and as learners, through immersion in University courses across all Faculties’. In the light of this information, it was obvious that the USC Headstart Program was meeting the needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous secondary students in its current form. Furthermore, with the newly created position in the Buranga Centre in concert with the School Talks and Liaison Program greater contact with interested Indigenous Headstart students in the pre-enrolment and enrolment phase had increased. The responsiveness of the Buranga Centre to the needs of Headstart students is set to continue with discussion presently underway as to the provision of textbook and travel financial support as an additional means to address to enable the participation and success of incoming Indigenous Headstart students.

5.2.2.1 Findings for Objective 4
In addition to the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits, additional ways to disseminate USC Headstart material directly to secondary school students and their families via Buranga Centre staff’ participation at:

- NAIDOC Day celebrations on the Sunshine Coast and in Brisbane
- Indigenous Service Providers Expo, Nambour PCYC
- Annual USC Courses for Careers Open Day
- Buranga Centre booth
- Indigenous Job Market event in Brisbane

Buranga Centre staff found that most enquiries at local event pertained to the USC Headstart Program and indeed the associated promotional material was in high demand at these events. Furthermore, an Indigenous Headstart student has been profiled for the USC website showing an image and brief testimonial; and an article about him was published in the North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health newsletter to both promote and help recruit Indigenous secondary students to the Headstart Program. This student also attends USC School Talks and Visits promoting the program and was the keynote speaker at the 2009 Sunshine Coast Indigenous Youth Leadership Forum, alongside Dr Chris Sara. Thus, engaging a successful Headstart student to inspire his peers, encourage confidence and be a role model will assist in building awareness, interest and participation by Indigenous secondary students in the USC Headstart Program. Notably, this student has applied to study at USC in 2010.
5.3 OUTCOMES

The key outcome of this Final Project Report is the evidence of a palpable, growing success of Indigenous student participation in the Headstart program at USC. Particularly meritorious is the a) increase in Indigenous Headstart enrolments, b) articulation of 40% of Indigenous Headstart students to USC Bachelors degrees across all Faculties; and c) the persistence of these students in their Bachelors degrees. Furthermore, the integration of two systems of contact and mentoring have created an effective ‘safety net’ of services to support Indigenous Headstart students to achieve their academic goals and have a positive USC experience. Evidence of USC’s commitment to enabling the pathway from secondary school to university was the provision of nine (9) scholarships for all of the 2009 Headstart students. At present promising discussions as to the provision of financial assistance with travel and textbooks were tabled at the August meeting of the USC Indigenous Advisory Council. The now nationally awarded USC Headstart Program remains a proven and successful pathway for Indigenous secondary students and there are all indications of a continuing growth in enrolment via direct communication with school students through the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits and other activities of the Buranga Centre staff.

Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:
To increase enrolments and create a register of the Indigenous secondary school students participating in the USC Headstart Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Goals</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education</td>
<td>• Indigenous students mentoring and contact ‘safety net’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School Talks and Liaison Visits and other events as a mechanism to disseminate Headstart information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increasing interest and enrolment in the USC Headstart Program with a spike in enrolments in 2009. This helps overcome the mystery of ‘university’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The mapping of previous and current Headstart student experiences indicates successful completion of courses by around half of the participating Indigenous students and a 40% articulation rate.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Goals</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students</td>
<td>• Information about the success of previous Indigenous students raises confidence and aspirations of future students interested in participating in Headstart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A successful Indigenous Headstart student has presented at the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits, promoted his testimonial on the USC Website, was subject of an article on Headstart for a local Indigenous publication and keynote speaker at a youth leadership forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increasing participation in the Headstart Program sees students returning to their schools and sharing their experiences as role models. Also this peer sharing process broadens students’ minds as to the range of opportunities that exist. This tacit process is one that assists in the recruitment of other potential Headstart candidates due to its implied credibility via the word-of-mouth.</td>
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| Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways | 1 ALTC Citation 2009 for USC Headstart Program hence is a ‘best practice’ program. |
6.0 THEME 3: USC SCHOOL TALKS AND LIAISON VISITS

6.1 BACKGROUND

USC Buranga Centre staff endeavor to establish trusting relationships with students and their parents of which the School Talks and Liaison Visits are a key mechanism. However, School Talks and Liaison Visits were irregular prior to the commencement of the Project and did not cover all secondary schools on the Sunshine Coast. Indeed, access to some schools was problematic. Hence, there was an apparent need to improve the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits as they represent a principle communication mechanism about university study that is delivered directly to Indigenous secondary school students. The goal of the School Talks and Liaison Visits aspect of the Indigenous Sunrise Project was:

To develop a regular, structured and strategic program of school talks and liaison activities that involve visits to up to 25 schools in the University’s geographic catchment area.

With only occasional and ad hoc visits to secondary schools prior to 2008, the Indigenous Sunrise Project team saw an opportunity not only to increase these visits, but to approach this theme from a strategic perspective. Historically the visits were unstructured and limited records kept about the students participating and the number of schools at which presentations occurred. Clearly, a structured and strategic approach would be more effective in building secondary school students aspirations and to make attending university a viable option after school. Furthermore, it would provide the opportunity to build relationships with not only the Indigenous secondary school students, but their families and the key staff at the schools. The building of relationships with the student’s families is particularly important as the role and influence of family in the decision to attend university was identified as a key factor in research conducted at USC (Powell, Lawley and Raciti 2006). Indeed, the Indigenous Sunrise Project team saw Theme 3: USC School Talks and Liaison Visits as essential infrastructure to improving university enrolments by Indigenous secondary students in the region.

Instituting a regular presence in secondary schools also would convey a concrete, long-term commitment by USC and the Buranga Centre to support Indigenous students with their pursuit of higher education and create a less daunting transition to higher education. Furthermore, it would serve to raise the aspirations of Indigenous secondary students by showcasing what educational opportunities and potential careers they can access and demonstrate that others have followed this path and succeeded. Overall, the School Talks and Liaison Visits would be a proactive pursuit that would positively engage with the Indigenous community and ultimately improve access, participation, retention and success of Indigenous secondary students entering USC.

6.2 ACTIVITIES

6.2.1 Phase 1

In Phase 1 an invitation was sent to University staff with an interest in Indigenous education to help develop the School Talks and Liaison Visits agenda. A group of five (5) members indicated interest, including Buranga Centre staff, academic staff, administration and professional staff, a Project team member and an administrative assistant. Unpacking of the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits occurred during this Phase 1. It became clear that there was an impetus to build and maintain close relationships with secondary school students in the University’s primary geographic catchment area of the Sunshine Coast and possibly North Brisbane from which some of our students heralded. These USC School Talks and Liaison Visits would ideally facilitate the building of relationships with the managers, teachers and Indigenous support staff of each school. The student talks would be developed in manner so as to encourage student confidence in participating in higher education, identify and introduce an Indigenous contact person at the University and to provide information about the support provided to Indigenous students through the Buranga Centre. Such familiarity would enable the transition from school to university.

The group also saw the building of partnerships with the schools as important to building confidence among young Indigenous students about attending university, as well as an opportunity to promote the Headstart Program, Tertiary Preparation Pathway and the available Indigenous scholarships. Monitoring and tracking of the impact of these visits,
particularly in terms of the conversion of school students to Headstart enrolments and/or actual enrolments was also a particular focus for future phases of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. This would enable the establishment of trends over time. Forming and nurturing partnerships between the University and the secondary schools was also paramount.

Finally, the group also discussed the frequency of school visits with a bi-annual regime considered best practice, albeit challenging.

A greater understanding of the existing School Talks and Liaison Visits was also established in Phase 1. The USC Indigenous Services Officer previously visited schools alone, scheduling two-hour talks with an anticipated 20–40 Indigenous students participating from each school. Some schools that had not been approached before, predominantly the private secondary schools, were not as forthcoming with information, such as an aggregate number of their enrolled Indigenous students. Thus, this represented a barrier to be overcome.

The result of discussions in Phase 1 identified the possibility of the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits to dovetail in with the University’s general School Liaison program. This would be advantageous as it would open lines of communication between the University program and that of the Burunga Centre so as to capitalise on resources presently allocated by USC. Furthermore, a review of promotional material of the Burunga Centre used in the school visits was flagged as an area of further investigation.

Under the leadership of the manager of the Indigenous Senior Phase of Schooling Office from the Indigenous Education Unit of Queensland Education, a collaborative school visit program was developed and commenced. Whereas the USC Indigenous Services Officer previously conducted school talks alone, now a collaborative program of visits in conjunction with Education Queensland, TAFE, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DIER) and Tourism Queensland with the aim to cover 18 schools in the region was being implemented. This collaborative approach – Murri Pathways – provided Indigenous school students with information about a range of options upon completing school. Importantly, the advantage of this approach has been access to more schools, adherence to an appropriate protocol, capitalisation of resources and more formal structure to the school visits. USC Indigenous Ambassadors, who are current university students, also accompanied the USC Indigenous Services Officer, providing a valuable ‘real life’ testimonial for students. Given the key role that

All of the objectives developed corroborated with the goals set out by the Federal Government for the School-to-University Pathways Projects.

6.2.2 Phase 2

In Phase 2, significant progress had been made in terms of the process through which the USC Indigenous Services Officer was able to access and visit secondary schools on the Sunshine Coast. As indicated in the first phase, a program initiated by Indigenous Education Unit of Queensland Education was developed and commenced. Whereas the USC Indigenous Services Officer previously conducted school talks alone, now a collaborative program of visits in conjunction with Education Queensland, TAFE, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DIER) and Tourism Queensland with the aim to cover 18 schools in the region was being implemented. This collaborative approach – Murri Pathways – provided Indigenous school students with information about a range of options upon completing school. Importantly, the advantage of this approach has been access to more schools, adherence to an appropriate protocol, capitalisation of resources and more formal structure to the school visits. USC Indigenous Ambassadors, who are current university students, also accompanied the USC Indigenous Services Officer, providing a valuable ‘real life’ testimonial for students. Given the key role that
the Ambassadors provide, discussions commenced regarding identify potential students who may also become Indigenous Ambassadors in 2009 and beyond.

The nature and scope of these changes to the school talks and liaison processes, in part achieved the goal set forward in Phase 1. The development of a broader university working party, as outlined in Phase 1, became redundant as a consequence of the significant changes to the liaison process bought about by the Murri Pathways initiative. The impact of this new and exciting Murri Pathways collaborative approach on USC enrolments was projected to bear results in early 2009, as this is the first opportunity for these secondary students to apply to university. Consequently, the immediate agenda of the Indigenous Sunrise Project shifted to developing a process of documentation and evaluation. As previously highlighted, the funding and staffing of the Buranga Centre inhibited the development of a strategic and comprehensive schedule of visits and the integration of a process to document the impact of the visits.

Murri Pathways was an immediate success. Privacy and confidentiality policy prevented schools from providing lists of individual Indigenous students enrolled or those in attendance. Thus, simple aggregate data was all that was available. Nonetheless, this data had not been previously collected, and provided a picture of the direct presentations made to secondary schools and their enrolled Indigenous students.

In Semester 1, 2008 the Murri Pathways team addressed a total of nine (9) schools and 262 students in the USC geographic catchment area. In Semester 1, 2008: the Murri Pathways collaborative school visits included:

- Nambour (n=57)
- Burnside (n=30)
- Noosa (n=30)
- Sunshine (n=30)
- Beerwah (n=20)
- Kawana (n=20)
- Maroochydore (n=35)
- Caloundra (n=30)
- Mountain Creek (n=10)

At the conclusion of Phase 2 the Murri Pathways team were planning to visit secondary schools in North Brisbane. The following advancements were made on the six (6) objectives of the Indigenous Sunrise Project.

6.2.2.1 Findings for Objective 1
Under the umbrella of the Murri Pathways collaborative, the visits have increased in frequency and access to schools has increased. To illustrate, previously the USC Indigenous Services Officer was unable to access students at Mountain Creek State High School, however this was achieved with the Murri Pathways team. The number of schools has increased as indicated by the data reported above.

6.2.2.2 Findings for Objective 2
A process of recording the number of students attending talks at each school was realised. However, due to privacy and confidentiality policies of secondary schools, the tracking of secondary students who attend the talks and then enrol in Headstart, commence enrolment at USC and/or make enquiries was not possible.

6.2.2.3 Findings for Objective 3
Regarding the building of relationships with school staff, our USC Indigenous Services Officer has sought professional development through participating in the 3rd Annual Engaging Indigenous Communities Conference, Brisbane. Furthermore, under the leadership of Education Queensland the Murri Pathways multi-sectorial team have been more effective in accessing schools, thus providing a platform for fostering these school staff relationships. The Murri Pathways team engage with each school’s Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and Indigenous Teacher Aid.

6.2.2.4 Findings for Objective 4
The protocol of visits under the Murri Pathways collaboration meets those established by Education Queensland. The training and employment of Indigenous students as USC Ambassadors who would also visit the secondary schools with the Murri Pathways team was under discussion.

6.2.2.5 Findings for Objective 5
Given the new structure of the liaison visits, the dovetailing of the Indigenous Liaison Program
with the general University program (as suggested in the Phase 1) is no longer considered necessary. The reason being, that the issues of resources and impact appear maximised with the present efforts of the Murri Pathways team. Hence, this objective was achieved.

6.2.2.6 Findings for Objective 6

Regarding the review and improvement of promotion material that may be used in the school visits:

- The recently formed USC Indigenous Advisory Committee has supported the promotion in marketing material of information about the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled relative to the region’s population (1.5% of all enrolments compared with 1.3% of the regions population).

- A ‘wall of fame’ including profiles of students for the website was under construction by Buranga Centre staff during this phase.

- The presentation slides used by the Indigenous Services Officer were updated and reviewed. The presentation is comprehensive, and very well structured covering ‘why should I go to university’, ‘why choose USC’, Faculty and course information, accommodation, finances and Buranga Centre services. The inclusion of an audio-visual component was under consideration.

The outcomes of Phase 2 were a substantial improvement on the superseded ad hoc School Talks and Liaison Visits of the USC Buranga Centre. At the conclusion of Phase 2, effort was directed at ensuring the sustainability of the very successful Murri Pathways school talks. Ideally, it will become a regular part of the school year; thus, representing a concrete commitment by USC to proactively forge relationships with schools and the Indigenous communities in the region; and principally to improve access to and participation in higher education. The Murri Pathways collaborative developed an effective working relationship with secondary schools. The synergy between the members of the collaborative served to benefit Indigenous secondary school students, thus was a success for the Indigenous community as a whole.

6.2.3 Phase 3

6.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 1

The momentum developed in Phase 2 with the Murri Pathways collaborative continued in this subsequent phase. The Murri Pathways collaborative school talks and liaison continued in Semester 2, 2008 with scheduled visits to high schools in USC’s geographic catchment area. Notably, the team broadened their talks to include schools in North Brisbane as students from this area have shown an interest in education options offered on the Sunshine Coast. In Semester 2, 2008, the Murri Pathways collaborative spoke with 162 school students at seven (7) schools. Specifically, the school Visits included:

- North Lakes (n=4)
- Bribie Island (n=35)
- Kilcoy (n=15)
- Tullawong (n=35)
- Deception Bay (n=35)
- Clontarf (n=15)
- Gympie (n=23)

Notably, the schools visited in Semester 2 were different from Semester 1 which was beneficial in providing a broad coverage of the USC general catchment area. It is also an indication of the willingness of the schools to forge a relationship with USC via the Murri Pathways Program. Other efforts were made by USC to directly connect with secondary school students. For example, a visit to USC from Thursday Island’s Tagai High School saw 35 students attending the Sippy Downs campus in May 2009. Buranga Centre staff hosted the visit as a part of the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits.

The secondary schools visited by the Murri Pathways initiative in Semester 1 2009 were:

- Noosa District (n=15)
- Beerwah (n=15)
- Burnside (n=25)
- Maroochy (n=25)
- Coolum (n=10)
- Meridian (n=4)
- Mountain Creek (n=15)
- Nambour (n=25)
6.2.3.2 Findings for Objective 2

More concrete evidence of the success of the Murri Pathways multi-sectorial talks emerged with the number of the Indigenous secondary school students applying for USC Headstart in Semester 2, 2009. Unexpectedly, however, concerns about travel time and the distraction of the students from their secondary school study commitments lead to cancellation of their enrolment by one school’s management—a situation that had not been experienced before. Upon reflection it appeared that the cancellation of the Indigenous Headstart enrolments stemmed from inexperience with the USC Headstart program and the newness of their relationship with USC and the Buranga Centre. While the cancellation of these enrolments was disappointing, the Buranga Centre staff are optimistic that over time a stronger relationship will be built.

6.2.3.3 Findings for Objective 3

In terms of the structure of the Murri Pathways presentation or approach, no major modifications have made outside of the changes to staff from the Education Queensland Indigenous Education Unit and the Sunshine Coasts Institute of TAFE. Furthermore, in 2009 School Talks have commenced with Noosa State High School. School visits were expanded to Year 8 to Year 10 students as well as senior students. This positive move will help inform students earlier in high school of the options and possibilities that university study has to offer. The impact of this move will not manifest for some five years to come, however, is certainly a step in the right direction toward improving participation at USC. Furthermore, it also signals a concrete message as to the long-term commitment of the University and the Buranga Centre to the local Indigenous community.

During 2009, schools in North Brisbane were receptive to the Murri Pathways initiative, with an invitation from Pine Rivers State School recently received. The positive response received by the USC Indigenous Services Officer gives strong indications that, with time, these relationships will grow, creating a platform to advantage Indigenous participation in higher education and the USC Buranga Centre.

An essential part of building relationships is also visible engagement with the Indigenous community at large from which the school students come. This being the case, the Indigenous Services Officer’s involvement in a range of activities such as meetings of the Sunshine Coast Indigenous Network Group, as well as being the Master of Ceremony for the North Coast Aboriginal Corporation Community Health ‘Well Persons Health Check Day’, which have been invaluable promotion opportunities for USC and the services of the Buranga Centre. What’s more, parents of the high school students are invited to attend the Murri Pathways school talks. On average two to three parents attend the School Talks and Liaison Visits which is particularly significant as the influence and inclusion of families in the decision process is imperative (Powell, Lawley and Raciti 2006).

6.2.3.4 Findings for Objective 4

In terms of increasing the number of Indigenous Student Ambassadors who visit the schools with Buranga staff, presently, there are no 2009 Indigenous Student Ambassadors, however a previous Headstart student did present with the Murri Pathways collaborative on occasion. Nonetheless, at least four (4) students have indicated a willingness to take up the positions in 2010. Efforts were made to train two (2) students via the USC 2009 Ambassador program however timetable clashes meant that these students were unable to commit themselves.

6.2.3.5 Findings for Objective 6

The promotional material to be distributed in schools includes the USC Undergraduate Program and Courses Guide, the Tertiary Preparation Program booklet, Headstart booklet and the Buranga Centre booklet. Investigations found that the Buranga Centre is limited to using the centrally provided promotional material of the USC Media and Marketing division.
Incremental improvements to the 2010 presentation format of the Indigenous Liaison Officer have seen the number of slides reduced and they remain succinct and very well structured covering ‘why should I go to university’, ‘why choose USC’, Faculty and course information, accommodation, finances and Buranga Centre services. Following on from Phase 2, an audio-visual component to the 2009 presentations is now included. This takes the form of the dissemination of the ‘Project U’ DVD developed by QUT that appeals to young school age students. The DVD and accompanying website (www.projectu.com.au) addresses the grass-roots concerns and questions of school age students and their parents about attending university. Notably, it is not specific to QUT, but university study in general. The ‘Project U’ material is comprehensive, providing links to information for high school students, Indigenous students, parents and guidance officers. It is written in prose and uses images appealing to younger students with links, quotes from students and addresses issues of relevance e.g. ‘Not hands on’; ‘Maybe later’; ‘Its all too hard’; ‘Too much stress’ and moving from regional to urban areas to study. In particular, the primary pitch of the ‘Project U’ DVD is ‘stop thinking uni is something other people do’ will be appealing and useful to the School Talks and Liaison Visits audience.

The ‘Indigenous Wall of Fame’ web page to be couched in the USC Student Services link, as mentioned in Phase 2, is now available on the USC website. Additionally, an important development to this web material is that the USC Alumni are currently working on an Indigenous Alumni page which is to be linked to the ‘Wall of Fame’. Finally, the Buranga Centre common room is now adorned with plaques of each graduating undergraduate and postgraduate student since 2000 to celebrate and inspire.

6.3 OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of Phase 3, it was apparent that the goal for the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits was achieved. In total for 2008, the USC Indigenous Services Officer, via the Murri Pathways collaborative, undertook school talks and liaison activities with 16 schools addressing 424 students. In 2009, eight (8) schools were visited and with information shared with 133 Indigenous students. Notably, six (6) of these schools were visited in 2008. This substantial undertaking is a significant improvement on the previously ad hoc visits to a small number of schools on the Sunshine Coast. Thus, this regular, structured and strategic approach to the school talks and liaison activities of USC demonstrates the achievement of the goal of the Indigenous Sunrise Project as previously outlined. Importantly, the momentum of school visits continues in 2009 and will not abate in the future.

Given the complexity of the decision process to participate in higher education, only broad indications of the direct causal impact of the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits upon ultimate enrolment outcomes can be extrapolated. The value of these measures of impact remains regardless of the limitations. The impact of the Murri Pathways efforts of 2008 appears to be reflected in the highest number of Indigenous Headstart students enrolling at USC in 2009 (see Theme 2: USC Headstart Program). The Buranga Centre as at the census date presently supports a total 100 Indigenous student enrolments and was particularly proud to celebrate the degree completion of 11 Indigenous students at the April 2009 graduation ceremony. With 45 Indigenous graduates to date, the 2009 graduates is certainly a noteworthy achievement for the students, Indigenous community, Buranga Centre and the University. A total of 37 enrolment applications was received, of which 27 enrolled in Semester 1, 2009 and 10 deferred for a year mostly to pursue travel in the interim. Compared to the 86 active Indigenous students reported in 2008, this increase in enrolment and completion is meritorious and a reflection of the endeavours of the Buranga Centre in the past 12 months in relation to the Tertiary Preparation Program, Alternative Entry Program and Murri Pathways collaborative. Due to privacy and confidentiality considerations, the lists of school students who are enrolled or in attendance are not available, hence a cross-referencing process is not possible and only crude correlations can be drawn. Irrespective of this, the impact of the School Talks and Liaison Visits on participation at USC is perceptible.
**Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:**
To increase enrolments and create a register of the Indigenous secondary school students participating in the USC Headstart Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Goals</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education | ✧ Indigenous students mentoring and contact ‘safety net’.
| | ✧ School Talks and Liaison Visits and other events as a mechanism to disseminate Headstart information.
| | ✧ Increasing interest and enrolment in the USC Headstart Program with a spike in enrolments in 2009. This helps overcome the mystery of ‘university’.
| | ✧ The mapping of previous and current Headstart student experiences indicates successful completion of courses by around half of the participating Indigenous students and a 40% articulation rate. |
| Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students | ✧ Information about the success of previous Indigenous students raises confidence and aspirations of future students interested in participating in Headstart. |
| | ✧ A successful Indigenous Headstart student has presented at the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits, promoted his testimonial on the USC Website, was subject of an article on Headstart for a local Indigenous publication and keynote speaker at a youth leadership forum. |
| | ✧ Increasing participation in the Headstart Program sees students returning to their schools and sharing their experiences as role models. Also this peer sharing process broadens students’ minds as to the range of opportunities that exist. This tacit process is one that assists in the recruitment of other potential Headstart candidates due to its implied credibility via the word-of-mouth. |
| Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways | 1 ALTC Citation 2009 for USC Headstart Program hence is a ‘best practice’ program. |
7.1 BACKGROUND

At the outset of the Indigenous Sunrise Project, there were two alternative entry pathways to university study. While these pathways were generally used by mature age students, on occasion students at the end of secondary school would enter USC via the Alternative Entry Program (AEP) and the Indigenous Tertiary Pathway (TPP). These pathways are engaged when university entrance scores were not adequate for the degree program as such they represent an important unconventional route for Indigenous school leavers. Thus, the goal of the Indigenous Sunrise Project was:

To review and provide recommendations about improving the suitability of the USC Alternative Entry Program and the USC Tertiary Preparation Pathway entry options for Indigenous secondary school students.

The presence of these pathways for secondary school leavers’ are important as they provide accessibility and the required courses in these programs improves skills and confidence to enable success at university. The AEP permits by-passing the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) processes. TPP is closely allied with the AEP but been developed by the University to provide prospective students with an alternative entry pathway to tertiary study. Upon successful completion of four TPP courses, students will be able to gain guaranteed entry into most USC degree programs through the standard QTAC application process. TPP also allows prospective students to experience university life before committing to a degree program and courses completed as part of the program are free-of-charge. The courses completed through TPP cannot be used as credit towards a degree.

The AEP and TPP directly enhance the accessibility and entry of Indigenous people into University programs and are aligned with the recent recommendations in the James et al. (2008) ‘Participation and Equity Report’ prepared for the Universities Australia by the Centre for Study of Higher Education at Melbourne University. In particular they are in accordance with Recommendation 4:

- **Priority 4**: Develop a concerted strategy to improve the level of Indigenous undergraduate enrolment; and

- **Priority 4**: Improve the rates of success, retention and completion of Indigenous students.

As part of this review of the AEP and TPP, both Buranga Centre staff and students enrolled in both programs were sought. Data from the USC internal enrolment records also was sourced. Thus, a broader view of the areas of improvement and overall assessment of the programs would inform the recommendations for the Buranga Centre and Student Administration.

7.2 ACTIVITIES

7.2.1 Phase 1

Both AEP and TPP existed prior to the commencement of this Indigenous Sunrise Project. This being the case, the primary task in Phase 1 was to establish a clear picture of each pathway and the areas of improvement. This involved establishing contact with the USC Buranga Centre and then over a series of meetings: a) build a partnership, b) identify and determine the status of the AEP and TPP enrolments by secondary school students and c) to identify issues, gaps and areas of improvements in both programs from a staff perspective.

7.2.1.1 Alternative Entry Program

In Phase 1, meetings held with Buranga Centre staff identified that the assessment of the suitability of potential students was an area that required improvement. Also, the meetings established that the procedure for entry into the AEP was as follows:

1. Potential student applies to study at USC via QTAC.

2. Soon after ‘on-time’ QTAC applications close a letter is sent from the Buranga Centre staff to all USC applicants (with a USC 4th preference or better) informing them of the alternative entry program and asking them if they would like to participate.

3. Applications to the program are received and interviews scheduled.
4. Interviews are conducted, and a basic academic writing assessment is given for the participants to complete.

5. The interview panel consists of a Buranga Staff member, a representative from the relevant Faculty and an academic skills staff member from Student Services.

6. Post interview (and prior to first round offers have been released) the Buranga Centre informs Student Administration of the result, and if successful a position of entry into USC is ‘forced’.

7. Following 1st round offers, if any student applicants have not been successful at gaining entry into any institution, the Buranga Centre will send them a letter asking if they would like to participate in the program, and the process starts over again.

Through discussions it was identified that the AEP could be improved in terms of the assessment tasks undertaken by potential students. At this phase of the Project, the assessment procedure consisted of an interview and a very basic writing task. It was believed that the interview section of the assessment worked well and required no changes. However, a more rigorous and formalised testing procedure would be advantageous. The inclusion of an academic writing exercise rather than a basic writing task and a mathematical skills exercise would better determine the readiness of potential students for university study.

7.2.1.2 Tertiary Preparation Pathway
The Tertiary Preparation Pathway began 18 months prior to the commencement of Indigenous Sunrise Project. In 2006, one (1) Indigenous student was enrolled in TPP and it represented an important third pathway for secondary school students to enter USC. Unlike the AEP, applicants are not required to apply via QTAC for entry into the TPP program. For the TPP program potential students complete a form that is processed via Student Administration. As the TPP is a centralised program at USC, the role of Buranga Centre staff is limited to sending information to potential Indigenous students about their facilities. As such, facilitating a closer relationship at the outset between the Buranga Centre and interested TPP Indigenous students is worthy of consideration.

The TPP program in 2007 consisted of four (4) courses aimed at preparing the applicant for higher education. Students can complete all four (4) courses over 12 months (part-time) or 6 months (full-time). The primary purpose of TPP is to provide an alternative entry method into a Bachelors degree for those students who were not successful at gaining entry through orthodox methods, or who do not think they are ready for tertiary studies. Upon successful completion of four TPP courses, students have guaranteed entry into most USC degree programs through the standard USC direct entry application process. The successful completion of TPP is also transferable for those students who decide to attend another university, though the need to apply through the standard QTAC application process in such circumstances.

TPP also allows prospective students to experience university life before committing to a degree program, and courses completed as part of the program are free-of-charge for Commonwealth-supported students. The minimum entry age is 17 years, thus secondary school leavers may consider this pathway and classes were held in Semester 1 and Semester 2, at this phase of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. While TPP cannot be used as credit towards a degree, they are a platform which builds students confidence and skills prior to undertaking their chosen degree program. Overall, the TPP program is an alternative for applicants that were not successful at gaining entry via the AEP. The TPP courses are general in nature with no specific Indigenous content or option to undertake an Indigenous course at the commencement of the Indigenous Sunrise Project.

The long-term goal for the Buranga Centre is to provide an Indigenous specific TPP program. While not a viable option given the small number of Indigenous students participating in the current TPP program, improvements to TPP that increased Indigenous student participation in the centralised structure represents and important first step toward this long-term goal. One method identified to do this was to improve the promotion of the program, in particular by developing Indigenous-specific marketing material. All material being distributed by the USC Buranga Centre was generic information produced by the University. The marketing material for the TPP program largely relied on a booklet;
however information could also be sourced via the University’s website. While the information contained within this material was suitable, the style could be improved to be more appealing to potential Indigenous students. This may include simple improvements such as including pictures of Indigenous students, using Indigenous designs as background images and re-wording the document would resonate with potential Indigenous students.

Thus, at the conclusion of Phase 1, two areas of improvement were identified. Accordingly, the recommendations of the Indigenous Sunrise Project in Phase 1 were:

- **Recommendation 1:** An improvement in the range and difficulty of the assessment of potential Indigenous students who are entering via the AEP. In particular, it is recommended that consideration be given to a more rigorous academic writing task and mathematical exercise. Improvements to the assessment tasks will give individuals a better gauge of their ability to undertake university study and not set them up for failure by under-assessing their capabilities.

- **Recommendation 2:** The embedding of Indigenous content and perspectives in the current TPP courses.

- **Recommendation 3:** The option to undertake an Indigenous course as a part of TPP.

- **Recommendation 4:** An enhanced and tailored TPP program booklet and promotion material that would be more appealing to potential Indigenous students.

### 7.2.2 Phase 2

In Phase 2, statistics on student participation and retention in the program was sought in addition to developing a survey to collect the views of current students enrolled in either the AEP or TPP. The survey was administered in Semester 2, 2008.

#### 7.2.2.1 Alternative Entry Program

During this phase, continued meetings with Buranga Centre staff identified additional issues relating to the AEP. These were the basis of the following Phase 2 recommendations of the Indigenous Sunrise Project:

- **Recommendation 5:** Increase community awareness of the AEP and how it can assist in entering higher education. The Buranga Centre School Talks and Liaison Visits would be a suitable vehicle to convey build awareness about AEP with secondary school students and their families.

- **Recommendation 6:** Provide greater support for alternative entry students once they have been accepted into an undergraduate degree. Examples of the additional support include immediate and direct links with the Student Services Scholarship Officer so to relieve financial issues of students and reduce this as a reason for students to leave higher education.

In Phase 2, data was sourced from internal enrolment records. Table 1 details the semester-based enrolments of Indigenous students who entered Bachelor’s degrees at USC via the AEP as compared to those who entered via orthodox QTAC methods. It also provides data on the number of students that then completed the semester. While completion rates for entire degree programs would be ideal, this information will not be available until after the completion of this Final Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alternative Entry</th>
<th>QTAC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entered</td>
<td>Completed semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 1 2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 2 2006</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 1 2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 2 2007</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 1 2008</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 2 2008</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: USC Indigenous student entry type and success
The tabled information indicated that at the conclusion of Phase 2, the success of those Indigenous students who entered USC via that AEP was limited. This validated the sense that the entry assessment process needed to be reviewed. If the AEP is improving an increase in participation and retention rates should be observed. However, the true effect of the improvements to entry assessment will not be seen until well after this Final Report is completed for the Indigenous Sunrise Project.

7.2.2 Tertiary Preparation Pathway
Changes were made to the TPP program in the interim between the Phase 1 and Phase 2. Key changes to the program included: new QTAC services, year round applications, early offers, new information to assist applicants, provision of scholarships and QTAC fast tracking offers if met OP/ranking requirements. Also, in Phase 2 the TPP survey was administered at the conclusion of Semester 2, 2008. Additional recommendations were developed as a result of continued discussions with Buranga Centre staff during Phase 2:

- **Recommendation 7**: Develop Indigenous-specific marketing and promotional material for TPP tailored to secondary school students that can be disseminated via the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits.
- **Recommendation 8**: Increase community awareness about the role of the TPP as an additional way for school leavers to enter higher education. An increased awareness of the program targeted at families would both influence and advise that school leavers have another option to enter an undergraduate degree.

Extensions to the USC TPP program in 2008 included the delivery of courses over the Summer Semester, off-campus delivery for teenage mothers as part of STEMM (Supporting Teenagers with Education, Mothering and Mentoring) and the development of a new course An Introduction to Working with Community (USC Annual Report 2009). Internal TPP enrolment data was sourced from USC regarding Indigenous student access and decision mapping and this is presented in Table 2.

### Table 2: USC Indigenous student access and semester completion numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Entered TPP</th>
<th>Completed TPP</th>
<th>Entered Bachelor Degree (Following Semester)</th>
<th>Completed 1st Semester of Bachelor Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 1 2006</td>
<td>Not Offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 2 2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 1 2007</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 2 2007</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 1 2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sem. 2 2008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the effect of the TPP program will not materialise until after the completion of the Final Report, the data collected during Phase 2 indicated that only two (2) students who entered via TPP have continued on to a Bachelor degree program. Such low conversion to degree programs and a seemingly large non-completion rate of Indigenous students enrolled in the TPP program clearly requires attention particularly in the light of the total number of students in the program. University data revealed that commencing enrolments for TPP university-wide peaked in Semester 1, 2008 with 148 new students. In Semester 2, 2008 the total number of new and continuing TPP students reached a high of 173 enrolments. Of those enrolled in TPP in Semester 1, 63% either subsequently enrolled in degree programs or continued with TPP (USC Annual Report 2009).
7.2.3 Phase 3
In Phase 3, a survey of current AEP and TPP students was conducted. The findings and recommendations as a result of this survey in addition to an update of the addressing of the recommendations are provided in this section.

4.2.3.1 AEP and TPP Student Survey
A test instrument was developed and administered to Indigenous students enrolled at USC at the conclusion of Semester 2, 2008. The survey questions were predominantly open-ended and were conducted using the Opinio software – an online survey program available at the University. A total of 22 useable responses were generated. This data was analysed and the implications for the AEP and TPP articulated.

Given the small response rate, only descriptive analysis is reported here, providing a broad view of the perceptions of AEP and TPP students enrolled at USC. It is important to note that number of non-response hinders some of aspects of the following analysis. The respondent profile reflected the enrolment data with mostly female respondents (n=11, 90%) who were studying full-time (n=8, 80%) having commenced at USC in last two years (n=11, 90%). In the year prior to commencing at USC, many were working (n=6, 50%), and stay-at-home mums (n=2, 16.67%) and travelling (n=2, 16.67%) or a combination of these options. Only two were at high school, indicating that the primary target for these programs is mature age individuals. Most of the respondents were under the age of 34 (n=10, 83.34%). This may be a reflection of the administration method rather than the cohort themselves. Prior education experience was predominantly TAFE (n=4, 33.33%) and Year 12/HSC/OP (n=5, 41.67%) with seven (7) indicating they were from the Sunshine Coast (58.33%). The remaining respondents indicated they were from South-East Queensland, and three (3) had moved here in order to study at USC. Location featured as the primary motivation for studying at USC (n=10, 83.33%). Coupled with the above information, it can be deduced that program participants were likely to be local residents who wanted to study locally. Interestingly, only one (1) student indicated that they were from interstate (NSW), indicating that effort in the geographic catchment region of the university would be particularly advantageous.

Item non-response (n=10, 45.45%) made it difficult to draw comparisons to the enrolment data with four (n=4, 18.18%) indicating they were TPP students and eight (n=8, 36.36%) were in the Alternative Entry program. There was an equal split with six (n=6, 50%) indicating that they would have applied for university study even if the TPP/Alternative Entry programs did not exist, and, equally, six (n=6, 50%) indicating that they would not have applied. Again, item non-response (n=10, 45.45%) did not allow much to be deducted from this question except that it is an equal spread.

In terms of preparing students for their bachelor degree, results were skewed to the higher end with five (n=5, 41.67%) respondents rating it as excellent (5/5) and two (n=2, 16.67%) as very good (4/5). Two only rated the value of TPP/Alternative Entry as only marginally preparing them for their degree. Question wording appeared to be problematic here as it referred to ‘completion’ and most respondents had not yet completed (item non-response n=10, 45.45%).

Next, the Alternative Entry students were asked whether the assessment procedure in the program provided them with a true reflection of their academic abilities. On the five-point scale, two (2), responses each were recorded for four (n=4, 20%) of the five (n=5, 20%) possible scale points. While no respondents rated the assessment procedure as ‘poor’, the results were mixed indicating that this is an area that needs special attention for the 2010 intake. Nonetheless, the current AEP and TPP programs was rated as either very good (n=6, 54.55%) or excellent (n=3, 27.27%).

The programs appeared to meet the expectations of the cohort (n=11, 100%). Interestingly, comments from two (2) respondents reflected university readiness in the absence of both the programs. In particular one respondent had applied both through QTAC and AEP entry with the other respondent confident in their capacity to undertake university study from the outset. What can be drawn here is the diversity of readiness and psychographics of students applying for this alternative pathway. Also, AEP is seen as a ‘back-up measure’ to secure entry to USC. Bearing in mind that only four (4) respondents indicated that they were in the ‘TPP program, three
(3) of these TPP respondents indicated that they intended to continue with study at university. This represents a conversion rate of 75% can be seen as a measure of success of the program and also an indication that the motivation to succeed in the student was apparent at the outset for TPP students. Either way, it is certainly an aspect that should be promoted.

Importantly, respondents were invited to share some of their positive experiences from the AEP and TPP programs. The nine (9) responses provided centred on two themes, being: institutional integration and social integration. Both of these concepts feature in the seminal work of Tinto (1975) as essential elements to student persistence at university. Institutional integration was most prominent in the responses with reference to understanding the layout of the campus, curriculum sampling and research skills. Social integration in the form of support from staff and also the ‘safety’ that a known Indigenous network provides during transition to university were noted. Building confidence underpinned both themes.

Next, negative experiences of the program were scant, with the inability to be given credit for work-experience and the anxiety of being interviewed by multiple people (including academics). Communication about the expected workload would be advantageous in the program, with one (1) respondent indicating that this was a negative aspect of their experience. The four (4) comments from Question 10, were corroborated the above as two (2) comments indicated no improvement, one (1) encouraged greater promotion about the process (assuming, the interview process) and, the final comment referred to a workshop about preparing for the anticipated workload.

There are eight (8) implications and associated recommendations of the survey results.

**Recommendation 9.** The survey question/response format requires improvement prior to any re-administration. Furthermore, the administration method requires review as the electronic collection of data via Opinio may exclude individuals who are less technologically confident. Such electronic methods of data collection appeal to self-selecting sample, which may be the case in this instance. Given the small scale of the cohort, a self-administered or postal survey would most likely yield better results.

It is anticipated that the results from this survey will serve as a platform for subsequent, annual administration as a feedback survey. It is important that such a feedback opportunity and metric for program success is implemented on an annual basis to determine areas of improvement. The student market is dynamic and an essential aspect of strategic marketing is to ensure that data is up-to-date and this contemporary data is a base point for comparison.

**Recommendation 10.** An implication of the demographic data collected is that the Buranga Centre’s promotional material needs to reflect an Indigenous female perspective.

**Recommendation 11.** Given the activities of students in the year prior to commencing university, these will impact upon the effectiveness of communication about the AEP and TPP programs. To improve penetration of the programs in the geographic catchment area from which most of the students reside, the media and outlets used to communicate and promote the programs need to reach stay-at-home mums and those who have returned from travel. Furthermore, promotional material may use testimonials from these two particular groups – ‘stay-at-home mums’ and ‘travellers’ – to enhance their appeal. Importantly, it can be seen that most entrants are not directly from school and hence liaison activities and dissemination of promotional material needs to be more strategically placed in the paths of those working, mum’s and travellers who make up the potential cohort.

**Recommendation 12.** Prior educational experiences need to ensure that promotional materials are pitched to take advantage of the TAFE/High School fluency. Importantly, angling the pitch in a fashion that it centres upon encouraging life-long learning, that is, building upon what educational qualifications that they have would be fruitful for the Buranga Centre.
Recommendation 13. Promotion will yield the greatest returns if disseminated through South-East Queensland and predominantly in the catchment area of USC as this is where the students come from. Emphasis on the convenience that the USC location offers in the promotional materials will be particularly advantageous.

Recommendation 14. The results relating to the assessment procedure being a true reflection of their academic abilities require further attention. While the data does not provide further elaboration, one plausible interpretation is that these responses may mean that alternative approaches are required depending upon the Faculty into which the student is entering.

Recommendation 15. The seemingly contradictory findings in which the programs were rated highly yet only met the expectations of half of the respondents may simply reflect that little is known about university prior to commencement. Being a service industry, higher education is best classified as having high credence service attributes. Such credence attributes not only mean that the perceived risk is greater and unknown, but it is also difficult to evaluation prior or even during purchase. Hence, it is an ‘experience’ and not one that is easily articulated prior to commencement (Lovelock et al. 2009).

Establishing appropriate expectations given the diversity of courses available is difficult. Nonetheless, it is essential that realistic expectations are established as it is that basis of satisfaction determination (Patterson 1995). Satisfaction is correlated with loyalty, and in this case, this would be conversion to a degree award course and persistence through to completion. Taking this into account, promises made in promotional material and workshops need to ensure realistic benchmarks are set and also communication to commencing and potential candidates, that there is complexity inherent in educational services and not all these will be apparent or able to communicated at the outset. The nuances and abstractness of many aspects of educational services simply cannot be articulated – they are tacit and to be experienced. This is the nature of high credence services (Lovelock et al. 2009).

Recommendation 16. Awareness that students use AEP as a ‘back-up’ pathway in addition to QTAC is important in terms of student behaviour. This indicates the strength of students desire to attend USC by attempting to secure a place via two pathways. There is nothing inherently inappropriate about multi-pathway entry. What is important, however, is that Buranga staff are aware of this and recognise it as a positive as it indicates the strong desire to enrol at USC. Perhaps, this multi-pathway strategy could be promoted in the school talks to a) reduce the perceived risk of enrolment and b) to inform students who may be unsuccessful mainstream that there is another way to reach their USC enrolment goal.

In summary, it is apparent that is that both of these programs attract a very diverse cohort – different educational experiences, orientations and motivations. Hence, from a practical perspective, a multi-pronged approach to marketing is essential with a variety of media, appeals and communications being used. More importantly, contact staff who are involved in the AEP and TPP programs are conscious of the diversity and ensure that the needs of the spectrum of the cohort is met in the program. Effective diversity management will be the touchstone of success for these programs.

In this final phase, the survey findings and recommendations were provided to the Buranga Centre to develop and advance Indigenous participation in AEP and TPP programs. Also, as a result of this process, a new self-administered survey had been devised for consideration by the Buranga Centre. These outcomes were presented to the Buranga Centre staff as recommendations upon which they can base improvements in 2010 for both programs.

4.2.3.2 Addressing of Recommendations to Date

To date the following endeavours have been made to address many of the recommendations made by the Indigenous Sunrise Project.

Recommendation 1 - Changes are currently underway at the time of writing this Final Report to improve the 2010 TPP entry assessment. The Indigenous Services Officer is developing a more
rigorous entry process as it remained apparent that incoming students were not being effectively screened for their readiness and therefore were unsuccessful in their university study endeavours. A new academic writing task and mathematical task specific to each Faculty is being developed so that each Faculty and for some specific disciplines, an assessment package that will more accurately determine the readiness of the students and their likelihood of success can be implemented. The objective is to set students up for success by tailoring assessment packages for their chosen Bachelors degree. The interview process will remain the same.

- Recommendation 2 – The TPP program for 2010 now embeds Indigenous content into three courses, being: TPP103 Bioscience; TPP107 Contemporary Australia; TPP108 An Introduction to Working Within the Community. This represents an important step forward in the attainment of cultural competence in the professional workforce, a priority of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC 2008). Transforming curriculum, such as in this case, brings mutual benefits with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students gaining confidence, cultural affirmation, and a broader repertoire of competencies (IHEAC 2008).

- Recommendation 3 – An Indigenous course is now provided in the 2010 TPP program, being: TPP106 Introduction to Aboriginal Societies. In the same vein as the advances made for Recommendation 2, the inclusion of Indigenous courses brings benefit for all participants in these programs and the positive outcomes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is both meaningful and useful. Furthermore, it moves forward the IHEAC priority to develop a national professional workforce that is culturally competent.

- Recommendation 4 – The 2009 and 2010 TPP promotional pamphlet includes an image of Indigenous art in the background and multicultural images of students on campus.

- Recommendation 5 – After much consideration, it was decided by Buranga Centre staff that the AEP and TPP pathways were not to be addressed in USC School Talks and Liaison Visits based on the philosophy that secondary school students were to be encouraged to achieve at high school and are enter via the QTAC merit based system. If students are aware that they can still attend university if they do not perform well at school, students perceive this as permission to perform poorly at school because they will still gain entry to university. As such, students sabotage their high school achievement because the meaning and benefit to attending university are muted if they know they can enter via a different stream. The current process is one by which the Buranga centre staff are notified of Indigenous students who have applied, those who will be granted QTAC entry and those who are not. Once QTAC offers are announce, Buranga Centre staff then contact those unsuccessful students and invite them to enter via AEP or in some cases TPP. As such, the philosophy that underpins this approach is that TPP and AEP are locum pathways only instituted when the secondary school student does not gain entry via QTAC. Importantly, this philosophy only applies for secondary school students who are immediately transitioning to university at the completion of Year 12.

At the time of writing this Final Report, all 2009 Indigenous secondary students entered USC via the merit-based QTAC process. It is important to mention that under the Regional Preference Scheme, secondary students will have their OP ranking improved by one position if they choose to study at USC. This is heavily promoted in the USC School Talks and Liaison Visits as it improves students’ chances of entry if they live on the Sunshine Coast or its eligible surrounds. This too has been positively received by secondary school students as it makes university an achievable reality, but still requires them to perform well at school. Thus, these outcomes give substance to the underpinning philosophy of the Buranga Centre.

- Recommendation 8 – Increasing community awareness of TPP via a range of community engagement activities have seen two (2) enrolments in Summer Semester 2009 and 13 enrolments in Semester 1 2009. Of these, nine (9) Indigenous students completed the TPP.
program which is the largest number to date. Comparatively, of the previous 14 TPP enrolled students only five (5) completed the program. While none of these 2009 Indigenous TPP enrolments were secondary school leavers, the recent success of the program are nonetheless celebratory.

- Recommendation 9 – A survey of the TPP and AEP Indigenous students is being prepared for administration at the conclusion of 2009.

- Recommendation 10 – The images used in the TPP promotional booklet are predominantly of Indigenous women.

- Recommendation 11 – The USC web-site now includes an image and testimonial of an Indigenous student who entered via AEP and who has since articulated to a Science degree.

### 7.3 OUTCOMES

At the commencement of the two-year project, the AEP and the then newly developed TPP programs were two additional options for school leavers to enter university education. The Indigenous Sunrise Project set out to review both of the programs, identifying areas of improvement and developing recommendations for the Buranga Centre staff and USC Student Services who are key stakeholders in both programs. This process was undertaken with the intention to improve the access and success of Indigenous school leavers in these programs. Deliberation of the issues identified by staff and students has improved the appeal and effectiveness of the programs in assisting entry to university study. However, the conversion of AEP and TPP students to Bachelor degree enrolments is yet to manifest. Ultimately, these programs represent launching pads for improving the participation of secondary students in university education. As reported in Phase 3, much headway has been made for nine (9) of the 16 recommendations provided over the two-year life of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. In the light of the subsequent changes made, the AEP and TPP entry options have been improved in terms of their suitability for Indigenous secondary students, this being the stated goal of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. As with all of the themes of this Project, efforts will continue well beyond this Final Report to address the recommendations and further enhance these entry options for school leavers.
### Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:
To review and provide recommendations about improving the suitability of the USC Alternative Entry Program and the USC Tertiary Preparation Pathway entry options for Indigenous secondary school students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Goals</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education</td>
<td>◆ Improvement in entry assessment that is tailored to degree choices to better assess readiness and prepare students for success.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Clarification and refinement of the process of identification and invitation into the AEP and TPP programs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>◆ Buranga Centre philosophy of non-promotion of AEP and TPP to school students to encourage merit-based entry has yielded results in 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students</td>
<td>◆ Embedding of Indigenous content into TPP courses and the provision of an Indigenous course option in the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Images of Indigenous art, Indigenous women and multi-cultural images in the print and web-based promotion material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways</td>
<td>1. Best practice process of review, multi-perspective data collected which formed the basis of recommendations established a lucid picture of the historical and current processes, practices and outcomes.</td>
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8.0 THEME 5: USC INDIGENOUS CENTRE PROPOSAL

8.1 BACKGROUND

The Buranga Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast is committed to prioritising the higher education outcomes and the career opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Islander people. The Buranga Centre promotes and ensures the full participation of Indigenous students in university life as well as the recognition of Indigenous people and culture in the activities of the University. Indeed, it is one of the stated USC Values in that the University is ‘committed to the advancement of human rights within a tolerant and inclusive society, in which respect for Indigenous and international peoples is fundamental’ (USC Annual Report 2009, p. i). The participation rates of Indigenous people at USC has consistently achieved and exceeded parity since 2004, as illustrated by a 1.42% Indigenous participation as compared to 1.29% nationwide in 2007. Similarly, access rates for Indigenous Australians have been above parity and trending upward for the last five years (USC Annual Report 2009).

Central to increasing the success of Indigenous people whether accessing or currently participating in higher education, is enhancing the recognition of Indigenous knowledge and culture. This can be achieved through a variety of vehicles that serve to understanding of the Indigenous cultural protocols and symbols (Andersen, Robertson and Rose 2007). Implicit in this is not only the presence but the perceived non-marginalisation of Indigenous higher education support centres in universities (Andersen, Robertson and Rose 2007). It is not only the presence but the reputation of the Indigenous centre/unit at a university influences the decision to attend university, predominantly as it demonstrates the cultural sensitivity and commitment by the institution to the advancement of Indigenous Australians (Powell and Lawley 2007). Thus promotion of the specialised support services available for Indigenous students is imperative, and promotion of the Indigenous centre/unit among the school and Indigenous community is essential to building enrolments (Powell, Lawley and Raciti 2006). Notably, the Indigenous Sunrise Project refers to the proposed unit as a ‘Centre’ and not as a ‘support centre’ which presupposes notions of inability. The term ‘Centre’ is used by the Indigenous Sunrise Project as it resonates that a broader range of roles and functions – beyond a curative purpose – is undertaken and the ‘Centre’ upholds a rightful position within the normal functioning of the university.

In terms of the Buranga Centre, with only one (1) full-time staff member at the commencement of this Indigenous Sunrise Project in 2007, the Centre was best regarded as embryonic and its opportunity to grow seemingly constrained. Notably, the newly created position of Indigenous Services Officer commenced in early 2008 and has remained at two (2) full-time staff for the length of this Project. Irrespective of the additional staff member, the presence, staffing and role of an Indigenous Centre is a critical factor in improving the rates of access, retention, success and completion of Indigenous students. Indeed, in the James et al. (2008, p.9) report for Universities Australia under Recommendation 4 (Priority 5) which seeks to ‘enhance the prominence and status of indigenous culture, knowledge and studies on campus’. Furthermore, Priority 4 seeks to improve the success of Indigenous students at university. In addition to the James et al. (2008) report priorities, further impetus to develop a USC Indigenous Centre Proposal comes from examination of student progress rates (SPR). SPR are a proportion of the courses passed in a year compared with total course in which students are enrolled. National higher education statistics reveal that Indigenous SPR of 68.6% is well below that SPR of 88.6% non-Indigenous students (IHEAC 2008; DEEWR 2006). While there is often a focus upon recruitment and commencing students, this data indicates that the support for continuing Indigenous students via the Indigenous Centre cannot be overlooked by universities.

The Buranga Centre is comprises of Indigenous Support Services staff offices, a twenty-four hour study/computing facility and a student common room. The role of Indigenous Services is to encourage and support Indigenous students at USC. They offer a friendly Indigenous presence on campus, academic and culturally appropriate resources and academic support. They also support and provide the University with information regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and knowledge. The Buranga Centre is also responsible for developing new programs and facilities available
for USC’s Indigenous students and reviewing and evaluating current programs and facilities. Previously located in demountable rooms, in 2006 the Buranga Centre was moved into the new, central, Chancellery Building. The Centre commissioned local Aboriginal artist Arthur Conlon for three murals which are displayed proudly in the corridors of the Chancellery Building. The Buranga Centre also facilitates the Buranga Indigenous Services Committee (BISC) who have representation on the USC Indigenous Advisory Committee (three student representatives) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s Student Liaison Committee.

The aim for the Indigenous Project Team was to develop unique model for an Indigenous Centre that is innovative and contemporary and drawn from best practice both within Australia and from around the world. Importantly, the development of a new model for an Indigenous Centre needed to be customised in order to create a functional and successful nexus between the University and the Indigenous community of the Sunshine Coast with services available to students’ pre-enrolment, upon commencement, throughout and upon completion of their degrees. Overall, the goal of the USC Indigenous Sunrise Project was:

\textit{To develop a model for an innovative and contemporary Indigenous Centre for consideration by the USC Vice-Chancellor.}

8.2 ACTIVITIES

8.2.1 Phase 1

The Indigenous Sunrise Project Team formed a committee of five (5) members from across the University – including APT Staff and Buranga Centre staff – who discussed possible visions for a formal Indigenous Support Centre that will operate with a modern model of engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The committee determined that unpacking this goal into three objectives was the best way to achieve the desired outcome. Specifically:

- \textbf{Objective 1:} To undertake a visioning process with key stakeholders within and associated with the University.
- \textbf{Objective 2:} To review Federal Government publications to identify salient qualities that could be advantageous to included in the Indigenous Centre Proposal and to ensure that the Proposal met necessary requirements so as to enhance its likelihood of success.
- \textbf{Objective 3:} To identify and then collate domestic and international models of Indigenous Centres in search of best practice and innovative ideas that would enhance our Indigenous Centre Proposal.

8.2.1.1 Findings for Objective 1

The visioning process with key stakeholders within and associated with the University – including USC academic, administration and support staff as well as interested USC students – resulted in an envisaged Indigenous Centre with provisions for undergraduate, postgraduate, coursework and research students. The Centre would ideally operate upon the principal of ‘engaging capacity’ as well as ‘creating capacity’. Our vision is of a Centre that presents the many faces of the modern Indigenous person, actively avoiding the perpetuation of a myopic view of what it is to be an Indigenous Australian. It will provide an Indigenous presence at USC and be a mechanism to develop cultural competency among staff and students of the institution.

From this visioning process, we pictured our proposed Indigenous Centre as:

- Appealing to the contemporary motives and lifestyles of Indigenous students of the new millennium.
- Operating with a more modern model of engagement, specifically one that proactively connects with existing services within the institution to prevent the marginalisation of the Centre and the development of an enclave which has been the experience or many other Australian universities.
- Being a nexus for services that are available to students pre-enrolment, upon commencement, throughout and upon completing of their degrees.
- A entry point for community to be welcomed
into the University, hosting functions such as the information nights for Headstart, Tertiary Preparation Program as well as social functions.

- Both ‘creating’ and ‘engaging’ the capacity of Indigenous students, alumni, community and staff.
- Corroborating both the University’s strategic plan and that National Goals for Indigenous Education endorsed by the Australian Government.

As a part of this vision, it is suggested that the USC Indigenous Centre be staffed with one full-time professor, one secretarial/financial administrative staff member, one full time position for student support (consisting of equal male and female Indigenous support staff), one full time Indigenous Cadetship Support (ICS) Officer, and one full time Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS Officer).

8.2.2 Phase 2

8.2.2.1 Findings for Objective 1

Another visioning process was carried out in Phase 2 with interested staff and students at USC invited to provide a ‘wish list’ of attributes for the USC Indigenous Centre proposal. The following are suggestions put forward. The ideal USC Indigenous Centre would:

- Have its own teaching school with academic staff
- Have a larger number of staff with staff dedicated to student support officers. At a minimum a community liaison, a ‘manager’/project development officer and administrative assistant
- Bigger space and more computing facilities (remaining in a central position in the University)
- University purchase of one apartment block (± to each block) in Uni Central, Varsity and the Village student accommodation centres (to be specifically held for Indigenous students) to help deal with accommodation issues for both commencing and ongoing students, particularly those from interstate and remote communities.

These accommodation arrangements would ideally have a live-in mentor/supervisor.
- Have Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at the entrance to the University
- To have a Centre that includes both teaching and research, with Indigenous lecturers delivering Indigenous content.
- To increase the number of Indigenous staff within the Buranga Centre and the University as a whole (full-time, part-time, academic and general staff).
- To focus upon increasing Indigenous participation in postgraduate research and coursework degrees (e.g. Executive Masters of Business degree).

8.2.2.2 Findings for Objective 2

The second objective was to review Federal Government publications in search of salient qualities that would be advantageous to the USC Indigenous Centre proposal. Determining the parameters of the proposed Centre’s core business is an essential foundation and it was decided that the proposed centre’s core business will be three-fold.

- To effectively address the relevant National Goals for Indigenous Education
- To continually improve upon the Performance Indicators for Indigenous Higher Education as established by the Government.
- To advance the vision of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC).

Each of these items of core business will now be detailed.

Core Business 1: Addressing the National Goals for Indigenous Education

As a starting point, USC was assessed in the light of the National Goals for Indigenous Education to identify opportunities that may be the focus in the proposed centre. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy forms the foundation of all Indigenous education programmes. The policy has been endorsed by the Australian Government, as well as all State and Territory governments. The
policy spells out 21 long-term, national goals, which are subsets of four major goals. These long-term goals, discussion regarding USC’s achievement of these and indication of their current status are presented in Appendix 2. In summary:

- **National Goal 1** strategies – most of the applicable goals are being addressed by USC via a variety of mechanisms. It is envisaged that these activities will continue and evolve with the new Centre. Improved professional development is a key area of improvement noted.

- **National Goal 2** strategies – the only relevant goal (9) is presently being addressed as a part of this Project under the Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP). Again, TPP will continue and evolve with the proposed centre.

- **National Goal 3** strategies – one goal (12) was the singularly relevant to this project, participation at USC is high and is in process to become a part of the marketing material produced by the University. Sustaining and building on this participation success is and will remain central to the centre proposal.

- **National Goal 4** strategies – presents a number of opportunities for the new centre to capitalise on. While some notes are provided in the table (see Appendix 2), these four opportunities – supporting language; management skills, appreciation of culture; history and identity; educating all Australians about Indigenous culture – require development and can be integrated into the model so as to provide a point of distinction for USC.

Core Business 2: Continually improving up on the Performance Indicators for Indigenous Higher Education

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) determines the performance of Higher Education providers by assessing providers in terms of four key performance indicators for Indigenous higher education, being 1) access, 2) participation, 3) retention and 4) success rates. These indicators enable each provider to assess its progress from year to year and to compare its performance with other providers, states/territories and national data. Additional to these performance indicators DEEWR, also assesses performance via the Parity Rate, which shows the proportion (%) of Australian students that would be expected to be Indigenous, if Indigenous people were represented according to their proportion of the higher education aged population.

Provided in Appendix 3 is a table of the Performance Indicators, their definition and the performance of USC drawn from the published DEEWR data. This table shows that USC is above or very close to parity in terms of access, participation and retention rates. Furthermore, our retention and success rates are above the national average. While these performance indicators are promising, the goal of the Centre is to simultaneously across all four areas to a) achieve parity and b) to exceed the national average.

Core Business 3: To advance the vision of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council

IHEAC was formed in 2005 and reports directly to the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The Council is presently in its second term and has overseen significant positive outcomes within the sector placing Indigenous higher education more prominently on the national agenda. The 2008 submission to the Review of Higher Education focuses upon the under-representation of Indigenous people in the higher education system, citing the complex nature of the factors that underlie this. Six strategies were proposed, with a summary of each provided in Appendix 4.

The Indigenous Sunrise Project Director, Dr Maria Raciti, attended the 2008 IHEAC Forum as an introduction to the goals and purpose of IHEAC. The Council completed their submission to the Minister for consideration (available online, follow links from: http://www.dest.gov.au/). At this juncture in the project, what was been achieved was the identification of the potential role of the IHEAC strategies in the core business of the proposed USC Indigenous Centre. Indeed, these IHEAC Priorities have been supported by the James et al. (2008) report for Universities Australia, the peak body which represents the university sector.

8.2.2.3 Findings for Objective 3

In Phase 2, the identification of domestic ‘best practice’ Indigenous Centres and the developing of a criteria for the benchmarking process commenced.
Members of the committee were invited to provide a list of Australian Indigenous Centres that they considered being exemplars of best practice. Secondary data regarding these Centres was to be sourced from the Internet due to funding constraints on the project which did not provide scope for the conduct of on-site investigations. Further, rather than examining all Indigenous Centres at the 37 publicly-funded Australian universities, suggestions from the committee were sought as members had a range of experiences and were aware of the better performing Centres. Meanwhile, the Project team viewed a number of websites for other Australian Centres and developed a range of criteria against which data would be collected. This process revealed that there was ample online material from which to develop profiles about Indigenous Centres.

The nine (9) Indigenous Centres identified by the committee as exemplars of best practice were:

- University of Tasmania: Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal Education
- University of New South Wales: Nura Gili Centre
- Curtin University of Technology: Gunada Centre
- Australian National University: Jabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre
- Australian Catholic University: Yalbalinga Place of Learning
- La Trobe University: Indigenous Student Service Units
- Monash University: Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies
- University of Adelaide: Wilto Yerlo Centre for Australian Indigenous Research and Studies
- University of Sydney: Koori Centre

The criteria against which to compare and contrast the identified centres were determined to be:

- Mission/philosophy
- Physical facilities e.g. computers, library
- Number of staff
- Organisational structure (e.g. staff titles or groupings)
- Services to students - undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research
- Evidence of integration/cohesion with other university services e.g. student services
- Cultural, social, sporting or research/teaching events or conferences
- Headstart-type programs and scholarships
- School liaison type programs
- Tertiary Preparation Program/direct entry options
- Summary of the courses taught at/by the centre
- Role in University ethics regarding Indigenous research
- Publications on their website
- Anything unique or interesting that gives the Centre a distinctive character.

Based on the above criteria, secondary data from the nine (9) centres were collected.

8.2.3 Phase 3
8.2.3.1 Findings for Objective 1

Objective 1, the visioning process with key University stakeholders, was completed in Phase 1 and Phase 2.

8.2.3.2 Findings for Objective 2

Little could be added to the achievement of the second objective. Updated data regarding the access, participation, retention and success rates of Indigenous students at USC was sourced to address Core Business 2 being to ‘continually improving up on the Performance Indicators for Indigenous
Higher Education’. Also, in terms of ‘Core Business 3 ‘advancing the vision of IHEAC’, the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education Final Report was released in December 2008, which called for an investment in social inclusion for low socio-economic and Indigenous peoples (Bradley et al. 2008).

8.2.3.3 Findings for Objective 3

Having completed the collection of secondary data from the selected national Indigenous Centres, possible international centres were considered. Canada and New Zealand were identified by the committee as the examples of international Indigenous Centre best practice, with secondary data collected pertaining to the following universities.

Canadian Universities

- University of Alberta - Aboriginal student services centre
- University of Calgary - The Native Centre

New Zealand Universities

- University of Auckland - The University Marae
- University of Otago - Maori Student Support Centre Te Huka Matauraka

Finally, during this final phase there were pertinent developments in terms of the USC Indigenous Centre proposal. Preliminary investigations commenced by Student Services into and Indigenous Accommodation model whereby the students with Commonwealth scholarships could have access to accommodation at one of the nearby student villages. The preliminary Indigenous Accommodation proposal includes the provision of pastoral care and support/assistance by an Indigenous student in their final year, on-site ITAS tutoring, computer and internet availability and access. The attributes of the proposed Indigenous Accommodation model is based upon Tinto’s (1997; 2003) notion of learning communities and also addresses the financial, accommodation and technology access barriers often faced by Indigenous students at USC (Powell, Lawley and Raciti 2006) and the ‘expectational climate’ created by the institution (Tinto and Pusser 2006).

8.2.4 USC Indigenous Centre Proposal

Aspiration Statement: To develop a world class Indigenous Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Statement of Core Business for Proposed USC Indigenous Centre:

- To effectively address the relevant National Goals for Indigenous Education
- To continually improve upon the Performance Indicators for Indigenous Higher Education as established by the Government.
- To advance the vision of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council.

Goals:

- To consistently, and simultaneously, exceed parity for access, participation, retention and success by Indigenous people.
- To consistently, and simultaneously, exceed the Australian national average for access, participation, retention and success by Indigenous people.

Objective:

The objective of the proposed USC Indigenous Centre is to progress beyond ‘cultural awareness’ at USC towards institutional practices that embody both ‘cultural safety’ and ‘cultural respect’ (ANMC 2007) so as to develop cultural competency among staff and students.

- Cultural safety is ‘a focus upon cultural sensitivity and an equitable power balance in other that one’s cultural identity and well being are not diminished, demeaned or disempowered’ (Thomson, Gower and Thair 2006 p. 3–4).
- Cultural respect ‘incorporates a holistic approach involving partnerships, capacity building and accountability as well as recognising the dimensions of knowledge, awareness, skilled practice and behaviour and strong relationships’ (Thomson, Gower and Thair 2006, p3–4).

Vision Statement: The proposed USC Indigenous Centre will strive to be appealing to the contemporary motives and lifestyles of Indigenous students of the new millennium. It will operate with a modern model of engagement, specifically
one that proactively connects with existing services within the institution to prevent the marginalisation of the Centre. It will be a nexus for services that are available to students pre-enrolment, upon commencement, throughout and upon completing of their degrees. The Centre will be a welcoming point for Indigenous community and host to functions and the dissemination of information in a manner that creates and engages the capacity of Indigenous students, alumni and staff. The Indigenous Centre will cover the breadth of teaching, research, service and partnership functions with ample staff to enable the success of Indigenous Australians.

The following are recommendations by the Indigenous Sunrise Project for addressing the proposed core business functions. Many of these recommendations may address more than one of the stated core business functions, however are allocated under their most dominant area.

Recommendations for Addressing Core Business 1:

- **Recommendation 17.** Improved provision of professional development and training for all university Indigenous staff so as to address Goal 1, Priority 5 of the National Goals for Indigenous Education being “To provide education and training services to develop the skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to participate in educational decision-making”.

- **Recommendation 18.** To develop a seminar series, workshops and ideally a course that supports the teaching, learning and maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples languages. Ideally, seminars and workshops would be open to all staff, students and members of the community (Priority 17).

- **Recommendation 19.** To integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people’s languages and words into websites, buildings, rooms and spaces on the USC Campus. For example, Indigenous names for new buildings would address Priority 17 of the National Goals for Indigenous Education.

- **Recommendation 20.** To develop seminars and workshops that provide community education services which enable Indigenous Australians to develop the skills to manage the development of their communities. For example, providing free-of-charge places for interested Indigenous community members, students or staff to attend USC Innovation Centre events such as ‘Enterprise Tuesday’, ‘Boardroom Briefings’ and ‘Executive Education Courses’. Thus, addressing Priority 18 of the National Goals for Indigenous Education.

- **Recommendation 21.** To address Priority 20 of the National Goals for Indigenous Education – that people of all levels of education to have an appreciation of their history, cultures and identity – through the following initiatives:
  - **Elder Services:** having two elders who have scheduled visits to campus and are available for staff and students to offer one-to-one support, to share cultural experience and knowledge. For example, nursing academics may discuss aspects of curriculum with elders.
  - **Room Names:** Rooms in the Centre named in dedication to local elders and Aboriginal leaders. For example, the University of Alberta has a ‘Sewell Reference Room’ in honour of the donations of Catherine Sewell.
  - **Spaces:** Design a number of spaces around campus that include Indigenous signage, art, information on brass plates and so forth and for the use of all students. These spaces would ideally be outside of buildings, and in visible areas. For example, a sitting circle near the Art Gallery, a dedicated garden near the Brasserie, and a space near the lakes. Information about Indigenous symbols, use of Indigenous language on fixed brass plates for students to read and reflect upon.
  - **Speaker Series:** Bi-monthly series of one-hour presentations that may be drawn from the content of Indigenous courses taught already on campus, but provided for all staff, students and community to attend.

- **Recommendation 22.** In addition to more Indigenous spaces on the campus, a year-round Indigenous events calendar would address
Priority 21. USC presently has a number of events, however, increasing these to 12 events – one per month – would facilitate an understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island traditional and contemporary cultures by all students. Events may include Indigenous films, storytelling by elders, bush tucker walks, workshops or seminars as recommended earlier.

Recommendations for Addressing Core Business 2:

- **Recommendation 23.** Statement on website of how the University is honouring Indigenous Reconciliation similar to that promoted by the University of Calgary.

- **Recommendation 24.** Display area on wall outside of Centre with photos of Indigenous graduates so as to create a history of success and raise the aspirations of students.

- **Recommendation 25.** Annual call for donations of books from university staff and students, including Indigenous students, to build a more substantial library regularly and afford academics and students the opportunity to contribute.

- **Recommendation 26.** Workshops on budgeting and financial planning for students and Indigenous community.

- **Recommendation 27.** Investigate developing a Indigenous peers mentoring program whereby commencing Indigenous students can be mentored by current Indigenous students.

- **Recommendation 28.** Develop an electronic newsletter, perhaps organised by the Indigenous student group (BISC).

- **Recommendation 29.** No more than two clicks from the homepage to Centre site.

- **Recommendation 30.** Developing a sense of reciprocity, community and ‘giving back’ among Indigenous students with the Indigenous student group (BISC) undertaking fundraising activities to provide resources for other Indigenous students such as a textbook allowance for commencing Headstart students.

- **Recommendation 31.** Campus tours for Indigenous community and family to see how the university works. This may be part of an ‘Indigenous Open Day’. In the same vein, the Centre may hold an information night.

- **Recommendation 32.** Expanding the Buranga Centre’s current space whilst remaining in a central position in the University and providing more fixed and mobile/laptop computing, telephone and printing facilities. Consideration may also be given to having a reflection/spiritual room or place on campus. This may be used for elder visits too.

- **Recommendation 33.** Advance the University purchase of one apartment block (+ to each block) in Uni Central, Varsity and the Village student accommodation centres (to be specifically held for Indigenous students) to help deal with accommodation issues for both commencing and ongoing students, particularly those from interstate and remote communities. These accommodation arrangements would ideally have a live-in mentor/ supervisor. This would mirror the model used by the University of Alberta which has housing options for single students and for families.

Recommendations for Addressing Core Business 3:

- **Recommendation 34.** Develop a more global mission for the Buranga Centre in the same vein as the University of Alberta whose Centre ‘honours the Indigenous worldwide view of education as a continuous ceremony of learning by respecting and supporting voices and spirit of our community.’

- **Recommendation 35.** Cultural connections program which allows Indigenous students to connect with tradition a culture such as storytelling, painting and Indigenous films.

- **Recommendation 36.** Actively seek to secure a broader range of scholarships and prizes starting from $250. Consider sourcing from Indigenous...
as well as non-Indigenous enterprises such as sporting associations, employment agencies and so forth. Also, consider having an Indigenous Awards and Prizes Ceremony in advance of the graduation ceremony.

- **Recommendation 37.** Collate and promote on the website and via media releases Indigenous research being conducted at the university and list of researchers affiliated with Indigenous research at the University.

- **Recommendation 38.** Develop resources and staffing to support postgraduate coursework and research higher degree Indigenous students. Commence recruitment for postgraduate coursework degrees (e.g. MBA, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diploma’s) and research higher degrees among Indigenous people working in professional positions.

- **Recommendations 39.** An Indigenous Research Grants Scheme as a part of the University’s current internal grant system administered by USC Teaching and Research Services.

- **Recommendations 40.** Provision of a USC Indigenous PhD scholarship equivalent to the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarship.

- **Recommendation 41.** The USC Indigenous Centre be staffed with one full-time professor, one secretarial/financial administrative staff member, two full-time positions for student support (consisting of equal male and female Indigenous support staff), one full-time Indigenous Cadetship Support (ICS) Officer, and one full-time Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS Officer).

### 8.3 Outcomes

The outcome of Theme 5 is a proposal for a USC Indigenous Centre that will be submitted for consideration by the Vice-Chancellor once ratified by the USC Indigenous Advisory Committee. In the interim, this proposal can be adopted and integrated into the goals and strategies of the Buranga Centre. All indications suggest that it is likely that the USC Indigenous accommodation model will progress and being a cornerstone of the proposed centre, advancement of the accommodation model will too improve the reception for the proposed USC Indigenous Centre. It is expected that, as with all universities, there are a range of pressures both internally and externally that may ultimately influence whether a full or partial uptake of the proposed centre will occur and the timeline in which this may occur is too determined by factors beyond the control of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. At the writing of this Final Report, the 2009 and 2010 Good Universities Guide awarded USC 4-stars for Indigenous participation. Thus, testifying as to the present success of the Buranga Centre and the University’s commitment to being a catalyst to advance Indigenous education in the region.
**Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:**

*To develop a model for an innovative and contemporary Indigenous Centre for consideration by the USC Vice-Chancellor.*

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<td>❖ Collation and review of national data and policy to determine current performance and identify salient areas to include in the Indigenous Centre proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to make the transition to university education</td>
<td>1. A visioning process to identify additional ways to support and facilitate greater participation and success by Indigenous people in the region.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>❖ Development of criteria and collection of secondary data from established Indigenous Centres to identify mechanisms that better support students making the transition to university education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous</td>
<td>❖ Review of national data and policy to determine current strengths and opportunities to improve the support provided for Indigenous students at USC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary students</td>
<td>❖ The visioning process identified the desire for a modern model of Indigenous engagement that inspires and enhances the aspirations of secondary school students. It is proposed that the Centre be a nexus for academic services as well as a place for Indigenous community to meet. Collectively these aim to raise the confidence and aspirations of secondary students who may be considering university study at USC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways</td>
<td>❖ Comparing and contrasting domestic and international Indigenous Centres in search of best practice that can be adopted at USC.</td>
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</table>
9.0 THEME 6: USC INDIGENOUS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

9.1 BACKGROUND

Upon commencement of the Indigenous Sunrise Project, only a very small range of Indigenous programs and courses were available at the University of the Sunshine Coast. As such, an opportunity to improve the Indigenous Teacher Education offerings existed. This is important as it progresses the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council’s vision of Indigenous studies that are prominent and vibrant part of the university curriculum (IHEAC 2007). Underpinning this vision is the extensive evidence in national reports, including the now 20 year old National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Statement (1989), that identify a paucity in the Indigenous content taught in Universities (Gower, Nakata and Mackean 2007). Importantly, the level of understanding needs to extend beyond ‘cultural awareness’, and progress to higher understandings of ‘cultural safety’ and ‘cultural respect’ (ANMC 2007).

Cultural safety is ‘a focus upon cultural sensitivity and an equitable power balance in other that one’s cultural identity and well being are not diminished, demeaned or disempowered’ (Thomson, Gower and Thair 2006 p. 3-4). Cultural respect incorporates a holistic approach involving partnerships, capacity building and accountability as well as recognising the dimensions of knowledge, awareness, skilled practice and behaviour and strong relationships’ (Thomson, Gower and Thair 2006, p3-4).

At USC, the larger goal – to enable a minor in Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies by 2012 – was beyond the scope of the two-year timeframe allocated to the Indigenous Sunrise Project, our involvement was delimited to the key initial phases to develop Indigenous Teacher Education programs and courses. Thus, the stated goal was:

To increase the range of Indigenous Teacher Education programs and courses at USC.

The impetus for Theme 6: Indigenous Teacher Education Programs was two-fold. Firstly, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that at the date of the last census, the Australian Indigenous population exceeded half a million, or 2.5% of the total Australian population (ABS 2006). Given that in 1991 the Indigenous population represented 1.6% (n=265,371), it illuminates the almost doubling of the number of Indigenous people in Australia. While the Indigenous resident population varies between States and Territories, the overall upward trend is apparent. In Queensland, being the location of both USC and JCU, there has been a 46% growth in Indigenous population, representing the second highest growth (28%) in Indigenous population only marginally behind New South Wales (29%) (DETYA 2006).

Drilling down in the population statistics, is particularly pertinent to the Indigenous Sunrise Project, as in 2006 the Indigenous population was much younger than the non-Indigenous population with 38% aged under 15 (compared to 20% non-Indigenous) and the median age was 20 years, being 17 years less than the non-Indigenous median age of 37 years (ABS 2006). A younger population means that a large proportion of the Australian Indigenous population are school aged. While ABS data indicates an increase in the retention rate of Indigenous students to the completion of Year 12 (from 35.7% in 2001 to 40.1% in 2006), when compared to non-Indigenous students (74.5% in 2001 and 75.9% in 2006) a substantial gap exists (35.8% gap difference in 2006). Also, 69% of Indigenous Australians lived outside of major cities with 22% in inner regional areas, 23% in outer regional areas and the remaining 24% residing in remote or very remote areas. Thus, for a regional Queensland university such as USC, providing Indigenous Teacher Education Programs is of heightened importance as our locality is one in which a larger proportion of a relatively younger Indigenous population may live. Subsequently, there is an apparent need to provide Indigenous school students role models and teachers with deep cultural understandings. Akin to the premise underlying the JCU’s Indigenous Connections Program, the recruitment of Indigenous students into teacher education degree programs is a highly desirable way for providing effective Indigenous education.

The second impetus is associated with the development of a culturally competent national professional workforce, which is a priority of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC 2008). Cultural competency in national professional workforces will not only benefit Indigenous Australians in terms of better services and advancement in terms of health, education,
economic and social justice, but it will facilitate cultural affirmation, improved participation in higher education and cultural safety within curriculum (IHEAC 2008). There are benefits of cultural competency for the professional workforce too. It increases the capacity of students and graduates in their professional practice, prepares them for work in a global environment, and enhances their repertoire of skills and knowledge (IHEAC 2008). There are many underlying tenets of cultural competency and IHEAC (2008, p. 11) define cultural competency as being the ability to:

- Interact and communicate effectively with Indigenous Australians, and
- To serve Indigenous communities effectively so that differences and diversity are respected and valued.

In 2007, the Indigenous Sunrise Project team were involved in preliminary discussion to develop two teacher education programs at the graduate level, being:

(a) Graduate Certificate in Professional Learning (Indigenous) – intended to be offered as an upgrading program for current teachers to ensure they gain deep understanding and capabilities in Indigenous education.

(b) Graduate Diploma in Education (Indigenous) – provided an initial teaching qualification for students with existing professional qualifications, e.g. a Bachelor’s degree.

These particular programs were chosen as they could be couched in existing program structures and offerings at USC. This was advantageous as the leverage gained by the existing program meant that efforts could be channelled toward the development and adaptation the courses to meet the needs of the Indigenous students undertaking them. Furthermore, this structure could also result in teacher practitioners with deep understanding of the Indigenous issues and the most appropriate means of teaching Indigenous students.

9.2 ACTIVITIES

9.2.1 Phase 1

The first phase of the USC Indigenous Teacher Education Program theme was to enter into discussions about and planning for the development of improving the Indigenous aspects of the two proposed graduate programs. Two key staff members in the Education Discipline group in the Faculty of Science, Health and Education were identified and expressed an interest in working to develop better Indigenous Teacher Education Programs at USC. After a number of preliminary discussions the project group has conducted one formal meeting with the Education Discipline group representatives. These meetings have helped to focus the direction of the Indigenous teacher education program development. The result of these discussions was the shaping of the new Indigenous Teacher Education programs with three identified areas of focus:

1. The current offering of the Indigenous Teacher Education component from another Faculty to be replaced by a more specifically targeted education course designed and written by the Education team members. The planning for the design and development of this course then commenced.

2. The need for a more extended program to assist teachers to deal with Indigenous education issues has also been identified. It is planned to develop a four course Graduate Certificate program to address this need.

3. To enable teachers to develop greater depth of capability in the area of Indigenous teacher education, it is seen as important to also provide a Masters program in Indigenous Teacher Education. The Masters program is planned to include a research component, to ensure that new issues in Indigenous education can be addressed, not only issues that have been already identified.

At the conclusion of this Phase 1, concrete plans for the first new component of the graduate Indigenous Teacher Education programs were identified. Furthermore, the Graduate Certificate and Master’s program initiatives were formulated.
9.2.2 Phase 2
Phase 2 was marked by some tangible steps towards the shaping of the postgraduate and undergraduate programs and course proposals. It was anticipated that these program and course initiatives would address the need for better preparation of teachers in general for Indigenous education as well as the preparation of teachers intending to work in Indigenous communities.

In Phase 2, the development of the proposed graduate USC Teacher Education Programs progressed steadily. This being the case, work commenced on bringing Indigenous perspectives into the undergraduate Education programs. The result of discussions with key stakeholders in the University bought about the decision to address the invisibility of the Indigenous issues in school education in the undergraduate Education program. The rationale being, that the needs and concerns of Indigenous school students and their parents are often not recognised by teachers educated in mainstream teacher education programs. Without explicit help to see how the many aspects of teacher actions might impact negatively on Indigenous students, most teachers are not likely to optimally assist their Indigenous students’ education, progress and development. To address this issue, three responses were formulated.

Firstly, improving student teachers’ understandings of the Indigenous students’ needs can be achieved by the development of an Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts course for the undergraduate double degree (BEd/BA, BEd/BSc, BEd/BBus) education programs. This course seeks to address the five main areas of: a) The Australian National Identity, b) Global Indigenous Perspectives, c) Indigenous Knowledge, d) Policy and Implementation in Classroom and e) Improving Outcomes for Indigenous Children.

In this phase, the course document commenced formal preparation by Ms Robyn Parkes-Sandri, a highly experienced and well-qualified Indigenous academic from the University of the Sunshine Coast. A profile of her is provided in Appendix 5. Ms Parkes-Sandri was inducted as a member of the inaugural State Indigenous Advisory Council to the Premier and chaired by Lindy Nelson Carr. This Council of 14 ‘wise’ Indigenous professionals includes Indigenous lawyers, physicians, and academics. One of the first activities of the Council included providing Indigenous considerations to a proposed amendment to the Queensland Constitution. This achievement by Ms Parkes-Sandri to be on a Council with that can influence legislations further evidences her standing and virtues she brings to the brings to the Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts course of which she has carriage.

The second way of responding to the need for better preparation of the teacher education students for Indigenous education at the University of the Sunshine Coast has been the inclusion of specific contributions Indigenous perspectives to their various undergraduate courses. This too was addressed with Ms Robyn Parkes-Sandri providing guest lectures on related Indigenous issues. She seeks to relate the Indigenous perspectives, needs and issues to the learning of language by school students. In order for the teachers undertaking their preparatory courses at University of the Sunshine Coast to understand the world view of the Indigenous students, as well as their ancient and recent history which impacts on their learning this lecture provides a cultural and educational perspective of the learner and their heritage.

The third aspect of the development of the improved Indigenous education provision for schools by the University of the Sunshine Coast consists of planning for a Honours program in Indigenous education. This program will seek to delve deeply into the pertinent issues in Indigenous education, ensuring that the teachers studying that program will have a very thorough understanding of Indigenous education and ability to deliver effective courses for these students.

9.2.3 Phase 3
The beginning of Phase 3 saw the continued development to the USC Indigenous Teacher Education programs and courses as the primary thrust of activity. The scope of the Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts took shape during this phase. Specifically, Ms Robyn Parkes-Sandri defined the purpose and parameters of the course as a mechanism to embed Indigenous perspectives, with authentic ways for teachers and the broader school system to
be inclusive and sensitive to Indigenous students not only in terms of their classroom practice but at all points of contact that make up the broader education process (e.g. construction of forms, protocols of face-to-face interactions with family). Furthermore, the purpose of the course was more closely refined to advance the understanding of teachers undertaking their preparatory courses at University of the Sunshine Coast to understand the world view of the Indigenous students, as well as their ancient and recent history which impacts on their learning she set out to provide a cultural and educational perspective of the learner and their heritage in the coursework.

During this time the Queensland College of Teachers Standards released their new criteria to which all education programs are to adhere by 2011. Accordingly, the undergraduate Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts course was being reviewed in the light of these standards. Once completed, the formal preparation of the Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts course was set to continue, following due process through the necessary committees and review procedures required for accreditation of the USC.

Importantly, during Phase 3 the guest lectures pertaining to Indigenous issues in the Language and Literacy and Diversity in the Classroom courses were again undertaken by Ms Robyn Parkes-Sandri. Unfortunately, planning for the Honours, two graduate programs in Indigenous education and possible extension to a Masters level program were suspended due to changes in senior management in the Faculty. Nonetheless, at the conclusion of Phase 3, there was continued progression of the Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts course. While the final accreditation and implementation of the course did not come to fruition at the completion of the Indigenous Sunrise Project Final Report, its steady progression was promising.

9.3 OUTCOMES

Over the two years of the Indigenous Sunrise Project has encompassed the important formative stages of augmenting the Indigenous Teacher Education program and course options at USC. The phases of this project have seen the conception, articulation and shaping of undergraduate courses and postgraduate programs. Furthermore, the embedding of Indigenous perspectives in other education courses via the delivery of presentations is a key outcome and success of the Project teams efforts. While the development of the Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts course proposal is all that remains active at the time of this Final Report, we remain optimistic that the graduate and Honours programs that were developed will be revisited in time.

Since the commencement of the Indigenous Sunrise Project, our efforts were aimed at augmenting the small range of Indigenous programs and courses at USC. The rationale behind our efforts was that by developing teachers with a deeper appreciation for Indigenous culture and issues, they would in turn create learning environments that would both raise the aspirations and confidence of Indigenous secondary students. As a direct consequence of such changes to the curriculum of teachers undertaking their qualifications at USC, this greater appreciation for Indigenous issues in school environments would underpin an improvement in the retention of Indigenous students to Year 12 opening the opportunity to enter higher education after completing school. Furthermore, the transition from school-to-university would be less fraught with fear and insecurity, thus enabling success. With anticipated increases in the Indigenous school student population (IHEAC 2008), our endeavours to pursue the development of USC Indigenous Teacher Education programs and courses was timely and with obvious advantages to improving higher education participation and success of Indigenous Australians of which this Project is focused. Overall, while we have not been as successful as had been anticipated due to circumstances beyond the Project’s control, this nonetheless does not detract from the headway the Indigenous Sunrise Project made in terms of attending to the stated goal.
### Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:
*To increase the range of Indigenous Teacher Education programs and courses at USC.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Goals</th>
<th>How Achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education</td>
<td>The draft <em>Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts</em> course addresses the invisibility of Indigenous issues in schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students | • Conception, articulation and shaping of potential undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous teacher education programs  
• Guest lectures pertaining to Indigenous issues |
| Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways | • Preparation of the *Indigenous Issues in Educational Contexts* course by Ms Robyn Parkes-Sandri, an experienced and well-qualified Indigenous academic.  
• Adherence to Queensland College of Teachers Standards and progressing through accreditation requirements of USC. |
10.0 THEME 7: USC INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

10.1 BACKGROUND

In the initial proposal developed by the Indigenous Sunrise Team, we identified that developing a forum in which information could be shared among university and community stakeholders as well as a forum where secondary students and school stakeholders could also attend would be a valuable inclusion to the Project. The sharing of information about Indigenous education would bring about shared understanding. The involvement of secondary school children visiting the campus would also be advantageous to building Indigenous students aspirations and confidence about university study, and the Indigenous content would be beneficial to non-Indigenous school students knowledge of Indigenous culture. Indeed, the development of the annual USC Indigenous Education Symposium would advance the vision of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council which aspires for ‘Indigenous people, culture and knowledge to be visible and valued on campus’ (IHEAC 2007). Accordingly, the goal of the USC Indigenous Education Symposium was:

To develop an annual symposium that raised awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitated an understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians.

At the outset it was proposed that we hold symposia on Indigenous pathways to higher education each year at this project’s two key sites. In particular that one would be held at USC and one at JCU each year for sharing of the information and experiences of people concerned with improving the educational pathways for Indigenous students. However, as the budget did not allow for JCU to participate, the USC Indigenous Education Symposium was developed. In lieu of a symposium JCU planned workshops with guidance counsellor from secondary schools at the conclusion of Project as an effective mechanism to relay their findings and recommendations. Consequently, the USC Indigenous Education Symposium remained as a key theme. Overall, by developing a forum that showcased Indigenous education – USC Indigenous Education Symposium and JCU workshops – the project implemented Priority 5 of the Indigenous Higher Education Council (2005) which was further endorsed by the James (et al., 2008) report for Universities Australia, as the planned symposiums would improve knowledge of and about the factors influencing Indigenous education participation and success.

10.2 ACTIVITIES

10.2.1 Phase 1

As anticipated, the organisation of the symposium was a large task, thus the first step for the Indigenous Sunrise Project team was to establish a committee of University staff that have an interest in Indigenous education and would donate their time to assist in organising the event. Thus, in the first phase, a committee of seven (7) members, including a Project team member, academic staff, administration and professional staff and an administrative assistant was formed to organise the symposium for 2008 at USC. Meetings of this committee were held fortnightly from early February 2008 to develop the event program, to provide regular updates between committee members and to set fortnightly goals.

Numerous obstacles and issues arose and the committee was able to resolve all of these predominantly due to the experience of the Project team member who had been coordinated a similar forum. Tasks such as the establishment of bank accounts, databases on payments made, timetabling, securing a keynote presenter, promotion, catering, audiovisual equipment and identifying other key contact people were dealt with by the organising committee. The largest issue that was faced by the organising committee was securing funds. Funds were eventually secured from the three Faculties at USC which allowed the Indigenous Education Symposium to progress.

Furthermore, in this phase it became apparent that the JCU team members were not be able to attend due to funding, thus, the decision was made to continue with the Indigenous Education Symposium with invitations sent to all Queensland universities. The theme of the symposium was ‘Pathways to Higher Education’ with the goal to share information about improving the participation rates of Indigenous students in higher education. The format included six workshops of which a participant will be able to attend three (three timeslots with a choice of two workshops being offered per time slot). The keynote speaker was Michelle Hall, Director of Aboriginal
Education and Training, from the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. The promotional material which outlines the program is provided in Appendix 6.

10.2.2 Phase 2
The 2008 Indigenous Education Symposium was held at USC from 17th - 19th September. A self-administered feedback survey was conducted at the event to assist in determining for example, the reasons for attendance, the quality of the workshops, expectations of the event, perceived barriers to Indigenous participation in higher education as well as the value of the information. A total of 20 surveys were returned however there were substantially more attendees than returned surveys. It was difficult to determine attendance as individuals arrived and departed at various times across the three-day event. For the 2008 Indigenous Education Symposium 120 students from two (2) schools participated. As the organising committee were uncertain as to the receptiveness of schools to the event, 120 school student places were allowed for. However, demand was unexpectedly high and in 2009 the number of school invitations was to be increased. Adhering with Human Ethics Clearance for this project, these school students were not surveyed as they were under 18 years of age and thus unable to give their informed consent.

Feedback on the Symposium was important in determining areas of success, areas of improvement and also to gauge a better understanding of the participants attracted to the three-day event and its impact. Details of the administration of the survey, its findings and resulting recommendations are presented next.

The self-administered survey was distributed on the final day of the Indigenous Education Symposium. Twenty (20) surveys returned. Item non-response was problematic. The non-response in some parts could be explained in there was a diversity of people in attendance and that not all questions were relevant to them. For example, people who work in Indigenous education in senior level as well as students and the general community were in attendance. Nonetheless, as the survey comprised of mostly open-ended questions, insights could still be drawn and be of benefit to the 2009 Indigenous Education Symposium.

An analysis of the 20 questions in the survey ensues. In terms of the reasons for attendance (Q1), the key theme underlying the 20 responses was an interest in Indigenous peoples. Increasing, updating and reaffirming their knowledge of higher education issues were apparent motivators for attendance for most. Four (4) respondents indicated they were studying at USC in Indigenous studies, education, nursing and cultural diversity fields and saw the symposium as a great opportunity to supplement their university courses.

Word-of-mouth referral from the USC Career and Graduate Employment Service, Student Services and a lecturer in cultural diversity was how four respondents became aware of and interested in the Symposium (Q2). Advertising on the University website and via email were also mentioned as the channels of communication which were effective in piquing the interest of the attendees.

The venues for the workshops and forums were rated as ‘very good’ (73.7%) on a five-point scale (1=very poor and 5=very good) (Q3). Using the same scale, each of the sessions was rated (Q4). Notably, most people appeared to attend the keynote address by Michelle Hall (n=13) which was very well received with 76.9% rating it as ‘very good’. However, while most were rated as ‘very good’, not all of the workshops were well attended – Workshop 1 (n=10; ‘very good’=70%); Workshop 2 (n=5; ‘very good’=60%); Workshop 3 (n=2; ‘very good’=50%); Workshop 4 (n=0); Workshop 5 (n=0); Workshop 6 (n=2; ‘very good’=100%) and the Indigenous Films (n=5; ‘good’=60%; ‘very good’=40%). From the Program of Events, those workshops with low attendance were on Friday afternoon after 3pm.

The 14 respondents’ who shared their expectations for the whole event (Q5) indicated that they anticipated they would be participating in a cross-section of activities and would gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture and issues surrounding higher education. All 20 (100%) respondents collectively agreed that their expectations were met; highlighting that the information quality was great, the keynote speakers were informative and they were very satisfied with the event (Q6).
The next question (Q7), asked respondents to share some of the barriers to Indigenous education and Indigenous people accessing higher education. Eighteen responses were provided with many comments centring upon Government policy. Self-confidence, self-esteem, and fear were also psychological barriers identified with financial stress, unrealistic expectations and lack family/peer support which appear to be predominantly sociological barriers mentioned too.

Next, respondents were asked to offer suggestions on how these barriers could be overcome (Q8). A wide range of ideas came forth, including Government funding and resourcing, recognition of the inherent skills and abilities of Indigenous people; greater consultation, more communication of pathways such as ‘Headstart’ and development of the Buranga Centre and Indigenous curriculum. Cross-training opportunities and providing a forum for Michelle Hall’s programs were noted. Furthermore, as well as the provision of emotional support and understanding from the broader community.

Returning the topic back to the Symposium itself, feedback on the information provided (Q9), while only attracting eight responses, was very positive, with the material considered ‘brilliant’, ‘interesting’, ‘informative’ and ‘valuable in my work’. In response to how the Symposium increased their knowledge, all 13 respondents felt they had gained a broader understanding of the complexities surrounding Indigenous education with one student stating ‘as a nursing student I will have a better approach’ as a result of attending the Symposium. Similarly, another responded commented that ‘as a teacher you need to get to know your students and realise that there are differences and to respect those differences’. Both quotes powerfully reflecting the impact that they Symposium had upon these students and the future implications that they can inculcate in their professional endeavours.

Question 11 asked if attending the Symposium would help them to better develop pathways for Indigenous people to access higher education. This question was best answered by those in positions to influence access to higher education. However, the comments from those outside of these positions demonstrated a noble desire to indirectly and in their own way make a change – be it writing letters, signing petitions, telling others of what they have learned. Two respondents, one that worked with schools and another that maintained networks with people in education systems both felt the Symposium helped developed pathways for Indigenous people.

The venues received positive comments from 13 respondents (Q12) and the organisation and promotion was regarded as ‘very good’ (70.6%) (Q13). Comments included that there was a good atmosphere and it was well organised and promoted within USC. A suggestion to improve word-of-mouth promotion and two respondents highlighting that they thought there would be a larger attendance and that there could be a focus upon getting more students involved (Q14).

Overall, the event was rated as ‘very good’ (63.2%) and ‘good’ (36.8%) (Q15). Suggestions for improvements included (Q16): reducing event to two rather than three days and finishing at 3pm on Friday, more opportunities of participation by attendees; targeting education students as it is valuable; using more visual aids in communication and trying to attract a greater number of attendees.

Demographically (Q17-20), respondents were predominantly female (70.6%); mostly 45-54 years (47.1%) and with a spread of classifications – USC students (35.3%); USC employees (23.5%); employees of another tertiary institution (17.6%) and other (23.5%). The ‘other’ roles included an ex-student, U3A student, independent consultant, the Regional Education Coordinator and a self-employed person. Eighteen respondents were from Queensland with two (2) from Brisbane and the remaining from the Sunshine Coast.

The survey results indicate that the Symposium was a success in that it achieved its core objective to generate a deeper understanding and sharing of Indigenous issues in higher education. At this stage, analysis of the survey revealed six practical implications for future Indigenous Education Symposia. These implications and recommendations for 2009 are presented follow.

- **Recommendation 42.** Improvements to the survey format, layout, wording and administration in advance of the next Symposium can be informed by this first survey.
Recommendation 43. Future promotional material that includes phrases that reflect the primary motivators will prove beneficial. From the findings, terms or phrases such as ‘Do you have an interest in Australia’s Indigenous people?’, ‘Want to know more’; ‘Curious about the contemporary state of Indigenous education’; ‘Stay up-to-date’. Also, ‘spread the word’ to encourage word-of-mouth communication.

Recommendation 44. Target in-lecture promotion of the event to nursing and education students. Indeed, if possible, encourage coordinators to perhaps include or link and assessment items to participation in the Symposium.

Recommendation 45. Promotion concentrated on the Sunshine Coast geographic area where almost all attendees were from will be advantageous. Promotion using media releases (via USC Media and Marketing) in the local and free community papers to stimulate attendance. Include in the event listings in free Sunshine Coast publication such as the Weekender and Noosa Weekender. Continue with and perhaps intensify web-site advertising.

Recommendation 46. Reduce number of days of the Symposium so as not to ‘thin’ the crowds and no workshops after 3pm on a Friday.

Recommendation 47. Theme future workshops on ‘government’, ‘psychological’ and ‘sociological’ aspects of Indigenous participation in higher education. Include opportunities such as a plenary session or panel session that facilitates interaction, questions and sharing of information.

The above six implications and associated recommendations are the practical outcome of the administration of the survey. These findings can inform the next Indigenous Education Symposium’s organising committee. The next step for the Indigenous Sunrise Project is to embed the key findings into the extant literature where possible.

10.2.3 Phase 3
The 2009 USC Education Symposium is presently under development with the 10-person organising committee drawing from the recommended changes resulting from Phase 2. The program has been improved with a three-day event and switching of activities to meet the different stakeholder needs. The demand to participate from local schools has been extraordinary, with a fourth day now scheduled for local secondary schools. Indeed, the venue has been moved to the largest auditorium on the campus and will take place from 12th – 15th October 2009. Broader promotion will see the symposium promoted in all lectures and on the USC website.

The preliminary program includes Indigenous education research presentations, including a presentation about the Indigenous Sunrise Project. Also on the first day, the USC Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan will be launched and the keynote speaker for the event to be Professor Yvonne Cadet-James. A more ‘hands-on’ and interactive experience is the focus of the 2009 Indigenous Education Symposium with Indigenous artwork and talk, launch and tour of the USC Western Desert Art Collection, Cultural and Ethical Considerations Workshop and presentation from Education Queensland’s Indigenous Student Support Services. These activities are targeted at the university staff and students and the community at large. Specialised activities for the secondary school students including an art workshop; cultural workshop and a bush tucker walk. It is confirmed that 240 students from nine (9) secondary schools will be in attendance.

10.3 OUTCOMES
The success of the USC Indigenous Education Symposium is apparent. From the initial proposal, now in its second year the USC Indigenous Education Symposium has successfully created a forum for the sharing of information among university staff and students, the Sunshine Coast community at large and, importantly, secondary students and school stakeholders. The demand experienced in the 2009 preparations from schools attests to the success. It is anticipated that the USC Indigenous Education Symposium will remain an annual event and continue to fulfil its goal to be an annual forum that raises awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitates an understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians.
Indigenous Sunrise Project Goal:

*To develop an annual symposium that raised awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitated an understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians.*

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<th>Pathway Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able</td>
<td>❧ USC Indigenous Education Symposium attended by 120 secondary school students in 2008. Due to high demand, this has been expanded to 240 students from 9 secondary schools in 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>to make the transition to university education</td>
<td>❧ The program for the Symposium raises awareness of Indigenous culture and aims to bring about a shared understanding between students, educators and Indigenous Australians.</td>
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<td>❧ The USC Indigenous Education Symposium is held on the USC Sippy Downs campus allowing Indigenous secondary school students to experience campus life and thus demystify what it is like to attend university and what happens at a university.</td>
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<td>Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous</td>
<td>❧ The program includes a keynote address by highly respected Professor Yvonne Cadet-James and a number of workshops and presentations by Indigenous academic staff.</td>
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<td>secondary students</td>
<td>❧ Experiencing and seeing the success of the keynote speaker and the presenters aims to raise the aspirations of Indigenous secondary students.</td>
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<td>Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways</td>
<td>1 Drawing on the survey from 2008 and associated recommendation, a number of key changes have been made to the program. As such, a reflective practice and survey approach for this and future symposium will keep the forum relevant, fresh and appealing.</td>
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In conclusion, this Final Report details the efforts, advances and outcomes made at both JCU and USC in the two years of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. As evidenced in the Final Report and presented in Figure 2, the Indigenous Sunrise Project is couched in the set Federal Government objectives and goals and has actively built, reviewed and improved pathways for Indigenous secondary students to continue to university.

**Figure 2: Indigenous Sunrise Project**

- **Theme 1:** JCU Indigenous Connections Program
- **Theme 2:** USC Headstart Program
- **Theme 3:** USC School Talks and Liaison Visits
- **Theme 4:** USC Alternative Entry and Tertiary Preparation Pathway
- **Theme 5:** USC Indigenous Centre Proposal
- **Theme 6:** USC Indigenous Teacher Education Program
- **Theme 7:** USC Indigenous Education Symposium

**Objective 1:** Identify and support Indigenous secondary students who are willing and able to make the transition to university education.

**Objective 2:** Raise the aspirations, confidence and educational outcomes of Indigenous secondary students.

**Objective 3:** Identify best practice models which establish successful pathways.

**School to University Pathways Projects Federal Government Initiative Goals:**

1) To build successful pathways for Indigenous secondary students; and
2) To raise the level of Indigenous undergraduate enrolments in higher education.

**Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) 2006 ‘Improving Indigenous Outcomes and Enhancing Indigenous Culture and Knowledge in Australian Higher Education’ report key priorities that will assist in closing the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in higher education.**
As depicted in Figure 2, the Indigenous Sunrise Project accordingly contributes to the objectives and goal that frame the School-to-University Pathways Projects Federal Government initiative. This initiative aligned with the identified priority areas of the 2006 IHEAC report to the then Minister for Education, Science and Training. The ultimate aspiration of which is to close the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in higher education. To this end, the Indigenous Sunrise Project contributes to this greater cause.

The multi-themed and dual-university approach of the Indigenous Sunrise Project was a holistic endeavour which bought to light a broader, more comprehensive picture that discrete examination of the seven (7) themes may have overlooked. While it was to be expected that the unique institutional and community settings in which this Project was undertaken would influence the nature, shape and saliency of issues addressed, we remained mindful of the wider implications and impact upon Indigenous education in general.

It is important to emphasise the sustainability of the multiple themes of the Indigenous Sunrise Project. Indeed, there is permanency to the pathways and the momentum built by the Indigenous Sunrise Project will be capitalised upon by both universities to ensure that they continue to evolve in perpetuity. Ultimately, enlarging the opportunities for Indigenous people to access, participate in and successfully complete a university degree provides a myriad of benefits to the Indigenous community and Australia as a whole. To this end, this Indigenous Sunrise Project has advanced, albeit incrementally, this overarching agenda.


Bin-Sallik M 1991, *Aboriginal Tertiary Education in Australia – How well is it Serving the needs of Aborigines*, Aboriginal Studies Key Centre, University of South Australia, Underdale.


Division of Finance and Resource Planning 2009, *Indigenous Enrolments by Year, Course and Faculty*. Townsville: James Cook University.


McConaghy C 2000, Rethinking Indigenous Education – Culturalism, Colonialsim and the Politics of Knowing, Brisbane: Post Pressed.


Powell B 2006, *Australian Indigenous students’ tertiary choices – Why Indigenous students choose to go to university, their institution and degree*, unpublished Master of Business Administration Project, Faculty of Business, University of the Sunshine Coast.


University of the Sunshine Coast 2009, 2008 Annual Report, University of the Sunshine Coast, Sippy Downs, Australia.


## Appendix 1: USC Indigenous Headstart Register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Course Undertaken</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Conversion to USC degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 (S2)</td>
<td>HS17</td>
<td>Introduction to Coaching Science</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Commencing only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS16</td>
<td>Communication and Thought</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Commencing only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS15</td>
<td>Environment, Technology and Sustainability</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Commencing only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS12</td>
<td>Indonesian B</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Commencing only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS14</td>
<td>Environment, Technology and Sustainability</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>Completing Year 12 at present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS13</td>
<td>Introduction to Creative Writing</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS12</td>
<td>Indonesian A</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Went on to Headstart in S2, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS11</td>
<td>Introductory Bioscience</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS9</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (S2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nil students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (S1)</td>
<td>HS10</td>
<td>Cell Biology</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>Enrolled in Parametric Science S1, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 (S2)</td>
<td>HS8</td>
<td>Social Psychology</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS9</td>
<td>Anatomy</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Went on to Headstart in S1, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 (S1)</td>
<td>HS8</td>
<td>Into Psychology</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Went on to Headstart in S2, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (S2)</td>
<td>HS6</td>
<td>Japanese A</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS4</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in Biomedical Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS7</td>
<td>Japanese A</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS6</td>
<td>Into Accounting</td>
<td>Withdrawn Fail</td>
<td>Went on to Headstart in S2 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS5</td>
<td>Intro Psychology</td>
<td>Withdrawn Fail</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (S2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nil Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (S1)</td>
<td>HS4</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Went on to Headstart in S1, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 (S2)</td>
<td>HS2</td>
<td>Japanese D</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Commenced in 2005 S1 Teaching Japanese but withdrew in first semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS3</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2: Review of National Goals for Indigenous Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Goal</th>
<th>Relevance/Discussion</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1: Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in educational decision-making</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of pre-school, primary and secondary education services for their children.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed as educational administrators, teachers, curriculum advisers, teachers assistants, home-school liaison officers and other education workers, including community people engaged in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and con-temporary society, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.</td>
<td>USC is proactive in this area, for example: has an Indigenous Support Centre, employs three Indigenous academics in the Faculties, reviewing Indigenous Employment Policy via the Indigenous Advisory Council, will hold the 2nd Indigenous Education Symposia in 2008 (part of this Pathways Project), has indigenous courses being: SCS130 Introduction to Indigenous Australia and SCS210 Indigenous Australia and the State. Potential employment of a staff member for the proposed allocated apartment accommodation (see 'Wish List') will be embedded in the Indigenous Employment Strategy, role including professional development and cultural support.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of post-school education services, including technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.</td>
<td>While not specific to higher education, however USC currently addresses this goal via the Indigenous Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Support Centre Director and Indigenous Liaison Activities</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed as administrators, teachers, researchers and student services officers in technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.</td>
<td>The USC Indigenous Advisory Council is currently reviewing the Indigenous Employment Strategy that will support this goal.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To provide education and training services to develop the skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in educational decision-making.</td>
<td>An area for improvement. For example, subsidising broader professional development to via the Association for Tertiary Education Management Inc.</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To develop arrangements for the provisions of independent advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding educational decisions at regional, State, Territory and National levels.</td>
<td>Activities include representation at the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council Forum (2008), nomination of an Elder for the IHEAC Elder Awards and development of the Indigenous Advisory Council at USC</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: Equality of access to education services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of pre-primary school have access to pre-school services on a basis comparable to that available to other Australian children of the same age.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have local access to primary and secondary schooling.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to post-compulsory secondary schooling, to technical and further education, and to higher education.</td>
<td>Provision of the Tertiary Preparation Course as a bridge to improve Indigenous access to higher education. (Refer to TPP in this Pathways Project Team Report); Indigenous Support Services are provided; Indigenous Liaison Officer promotes the USC and its courses regularly and comprehensively.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Equity of educational participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in pre-school education for a period similar to that for other Australian children.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To achieve the participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in compulsory schooling.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. To achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in post-secondary education, in technical and further education, and in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of other Australians in those sectors.</td>
<td>Appendix 5 details that latest USC participation rate was 1.42% (2007) and reports an average of 1.05%, under the national average of 1.25%.</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 4: Equitable and appropriate educational outcomes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. To provide adequate preparation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through pre-school education for the schooling years ahead.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attainment of skills to the same standard as other Australian students throughout the compulsory schooling years.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the successful completion of Year 12 or equivalent at the same rates as for other Australian students.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in technical and further education, and in higher education, as for other Australians.</td>
<td>Provision of facilitators at the university including: equipment, cultural support and affirmation via Indigenous Support Services, creating a regular friendly Indigenous presence on the university campus, hosting Indigenous events. Appendix 5 further details USC’s Performance Indicators.</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. To develop programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages.</td>
<td>Currently not addressed. May provide a unique opportunity for USC.</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. To provide community education services which enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people develop the skills to manage the development of their communities.</td>
<td>Currently not addressed. May be able to effectively link into the new Executive MBA program available through the Business Faculty in 2009.</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. To enable the attainment of proficiency in English language and numeracy competencies by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults with limited or no educational experience.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. To enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at all levels of education to have an appreciation of their history, cultures and identity.</td>
<td>Not currently addressed. May include hosting of cultural events, art gallery exhibitions or other social events.</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures.</td>
<td>Not currently addressed. May include hosting of cultural events, integration of Indigenous content in the USC Core Courses.</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3: USC’s Indigenous Education Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>USC’s performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access Rate</strong> – Compares the actual number of commencing Indigenous students to the actual number of commencing domestic students in any one year (i.e. number of Indigenous commencing students divided by number of domestic commencing students, expressed as a %).</td>
<td>National average is 1.55  USC average is 1.32  2001 – 0.22  2002 – 1.37  2003 – 1.54  2004 – 1.12  2005 – 1.41  2006 – 1.25  2007 – 1.50  2008 – 1.63  2009 – 1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation Rate</strong> – Compares the actual number of total Indigenous students to the actual number of total domestic students in any one year (i.e. the total number of Indigenous students divided by the total number of domestic students, expressed as a %).</td>
<td>National average is 1.25  USC average is 1.05  2001 – 0.44  2002 – 0.74  2003 – 1.14  2004 – 1.07  2005 – 1.29  2006 – 1.26  2007 – 1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retention Rate</strong> – Compares the Apparent Retention Rates (ARR) of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as a ratio (i.e. the ARR for Indigenous students divided by the ARR for non-Indigenous students). The ARR is the proportion of students who are retained in a course from the commencement of one academic year to the next (excluding completions). A Retention Rate of 1.0 would indicate equity (or parity) for Indigenous students with non-Indigenous students.</td>
<td>National average is 0.78  USC average is 0.96  2003 – 1.08  2004 – 0.75  2005 – 1.14  2006 – 0.89  2007 – 0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success Rate</strong> – Compares the Student Progress Rates (SPR) for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as a ratio (i.e. the SPR for Indigenous students divided by the SPR for non-Indigenous students). The SPR is the proportion of units students passed in a year compared with total units the students were enrolled in. A Success Rate of 1.0 would indicate equity (or parity) for Indigenous students with non-Indigenous students. The Success Rate data refer to the year previous to that in which it is reported.</td>
<td>National average is 0.76  USC average is 0.88  2001 – 1.07  2002 – 0.91  2003 – 0.73  2004 – 0.83  2005 – 0.80  2006 – 0.89  2007 – 0.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: IHEAC Key Strategies

1. The establishment of the Indigenous Learned Academy as a mechanism to make visible and ingrate the expertise of Indigenous knowledge systems within higher education in Australia.

2. The establishment of the Indigenous Centre for Research Excellence to a) build Indigenous research capacity by raising postgraduate participation and completion rates, and b) to build Indigenous research leadership within the higher education system.

3. Develop a national Indigenous workforce and cultural competency framework that will a) build the Indigenous higher education workforce and b) build the Indigenous professional workforce. In particular, IHEAC note that the 2006 ABS Census indicated that 38% of the Indigenous population are aged under 15 years while this is only 19% for the non-Indigenous population.

4. The development of a National Indigenous Teaching and Learning Network or Centre within the higher education sector to develop national level strategies and programs to support and increase the number and capacity of Indigenous students in higher education. Included in this strategy is the IHEAC case for improving student income support.

5. Encouraging universities to address the Indigenous participation in the governance structures and practices of the Australian higher education sector. Importantly, IHEAC proposed that Indigenous governance issues should not be quarantined for example, only in regards to Indigenous Education Support Centres.

6. Improved funding for Indigenous Education Support Centres to sustain a visible indigenous presence in universities. Changes in funding are aimed to keep pace with changes in the sector and the changing needs and demands of Indigenous people. IHEAC strategy is for an equitable share of total education funding for indigenous higher education to ensure that Centres are funded for success.

(IHEAC 2008)

Appendix 5: Profile of Ms Robyn Parkes-Sandri

Robyn Sandri is a descendent of the Gungarri people in south west Queensland. Her grandmother was a stolen child, and Robyn was raised in hiding for fear of being removed. She qualified to teach in Queensland and went to do postgraduate study in the United States and feels she stayed there for twenty years to continue “hiding out” until her country called her home. Robyn holds Masters Degrees’ in Early Childhood Education and Fine Arts (writing). She has lectured in Universities for 12 years in Communication, writing and educational research. She is currently completing a PhD Indigenous research project on transition to school from home for Indigenous children, and questioning the cultural safety of mainstream schools. Robyn lives in Buderim and lecturers in Early Childhood Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Her abiding interest is Indigenous children’s human rights and self-determination for her people.
Appendix 6: USC Indigenous Education Symposium 2008
A1 Poster - full symposium

Indigenous Education Symposium
17–19 September 2008

University of the Sunshine Coast
Queensland, Australia

Raising awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitating understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians.

Keynote speaker Michelle Hall, Director of Aboriginal Education and Training, NSW Department of Education and Training.

The Buranga Centre
"A place to listen and learn"

For more information visit <www.usc.edu.au/events>.
Indigenous Education Symposium
17–19 September 2008

Day 1: 17 September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Stream 1</th>
<th>Stream 2</th>
<th>Stream 3</th>
<th>Stream 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10am–10.45am</td>
<td>Su Gould and Corey Czink Baranga Centre into</td>
<td>De Greer Art Workshop</td>
<td>Lyndon Davis Cultural Workshop</td>
<td>Beverly Hand Indigenous Environmental Relationships Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue: Baranga Centre</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45am–11.20am</td>
<td>Beverly Hand Indigenous Environmental</td>
<td>Su Gould and Corey Czink Baranga Centre into</td>
<td>De Greer Art Workshop</td>
<td>Lyndon Davis Cultural Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships Workshop</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30am–12.50pm</td>
<td>Lyndon Davis Cultural Workshop</td>
<td>Beverly Hand Indigenous Environmental Relationships Workshop</td>
<td>Su Gould and Corey Czink Baranga Centre into</td>
<td>De Greer Art Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.50pm–1.15pm</td>
<td>Dr Greer Art Workshop</td>
<td>Lyndon Davis Cultural Workshop</td>
<td>Beverly Hand Indigenous Environmental Relationships Workshop</td>
<td>Su Gould and Corey Czink Baranga Centre into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Venue: University Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1–2pm Lunch and guided tour of USCS Western</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desert Art Collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 2: 18 September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12noon–2pm</td>
<td>Indigenous Research Ethics Workshop–part 1 (Library/Seminar Room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30–4.30pm</td>
<td>Indigenous Research Ethics Workshop–part 2 (Library/Seminar Room)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 3: 19 September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30–10am</td>
<td>Arrive and Registration (auditorium foyer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–10.15am</td>
<td>Official opening–ZVC (auditorium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15–10.30am</td>
<td>Welcome to country–Uncle Archie Besley (auditorium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30–12.30am</td>
<td>Keynote speaker Michelle Hall, ‘Sustainable development is everyone’s business’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Auditorium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12noon–1.15pm</td>
<td>Lunch and guided tour of USCS Western Desert Art collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–2.30pm</td>
<td>Workshops 1 (optional A or B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4pm</td>
<td>Workshops 2 (optional A or B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–4.30pm</td>
<td>Workshops 3 (optional A or B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–2.30pm</td>
<td>Corey Czink–Indigenous films (Auditorium)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Option A – Venue: C1.40</th>
<th>Option B – Venue: C1.39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2pm–Workshop 1</td>
<td>Yawne Cadet James</td>
<td>Jahan Tourkiet, Maria Raud and Brendan Powell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Czink University</td>
<td>USC’s Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pm–Workshop 2</td>
<td>Judith Wicker</td>
<td>Sally Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the certificate of exemption?</td>
<td>Education Queensland’s Indigenous Education Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4pm–Workshop 3</td>
<td>Robert Parry-Smith</td>
<td>Sally Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Safaris and Invisibility</td>
<td>Indigenous Self-Efficacy Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Indigenous Cultural Experience

### Indigenous Education Symposium

**Program of Events 17 September 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Stream 1</th>
<th>Stream 2</th>
<th>Stream 3</th>
<th>Stream 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.15–1pm</td>
<td>De Greer Art Workshop Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Lyndon Davis Cultural Workshop Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Beverly Hand Indigenous Environmental Relationships Workshop Venue: University Club</td>
<td>Su Gould and Corey Czok Buranga Centre Info Venue: Buranga Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2pm</td>
<td>Lunch and guided tour of USC's Western Desert Art collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raising awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitating understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians.

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**The Buranga Centre**

"A place to listen and learn"

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Registration by 29 August—contact Nicole Copley
Tel: 5430 1226 | Email: njc007@student.usc.edu.au
For more information visit www.usc.edu.au/events

www.usc.edu.au

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This project has been assisted through the Grants Program.
The Buranga Centre
"A place to listen and learn"

University of the Sunshine Coast
Queensland, Australia

Australian Indigenous Educational Films & Documentaries

19th September, USC Auditorium
2.00pm ~ 5.00pm
Eidos is an independent research institute and think tank. Its objective is to generate new ideas and dialogue on good education, labour market and social public policy. We believe that engaged research collaboration and policy innovation contributes to a good society. Eidos is Greek for ideas. Our aim is to inspire, facilitate and support our members and partners to be more collaborative, effective and legitimate.

Eidos members include universities and policy leaders. We draw the intellectual strength of our research community into an active dialogue with policy makers and practitioners. Within the Eidos membership there are more than 50 leading research and policy institutes and centres, and over 300 active senior and early career researchers.

WHAT WE WORK ON

Practical, applied, policy relevant research. Eidos believes research is likely to have a greater impact on policy and practice through supporting coordinated bodies of work, rather than a scatter of atomised, free-standing projects. We focus on five areas:

- **LIFE**: lifecourse learning and work transitions;
- **WIRED**: new communications, technologies and education and social policy;
- **COMMUNITY**: learning, labour and community;
- **SUSTAINABLE**: sustainable education systems and education for sustainability;
- **SAFE**: strengthening the nation’s social and economic fabric.

WHO WE ARE

WHO WE WORK WITH

Our partners include policy-makers, universities, companies and public service providers.

HOW WE WORK

Eidos increases the collaborative and creative capacity and impact of researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. We position the partners at the forefront in creating good public policy - locally, nationally and globally. We seek to bring new voices and mentor a new generation of researchers and policy-makers, for example through an active program of internships, winter schools and emerging researchers conferences.

WHAT WE OFFER

Our research and policy teams analyse social and economic change, which we connect to innovation and learning in organisations. We help our members and clients forecast, lead, and respond to emerging challenges.

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Eidos gives high priority to effective dissemination and works closely with the research teams to ensure that the findings are of value to policy-makers and practitioners. We use media, public events, seminars, workshops, and publications to communicate our ideas. All our reports can be downloaded free from the Eidos website.

WWW.EIDOS.ORG.AU