

Indigenous Student Success Program

2021 Performance Report

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1. Enrolments (Access)

Overview of enrolments for 2021

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment headcount at the University of Tasmania decreased by 18.4% from 2020 to 2021, from 1041 to 850 students. Influenced by COVID-19, this fall in enrolments was seen State-wide. All 3 major campuses saw decreases in enrolments. Hobart remained the campus with the most enrolments but experienced a 22% decrease, with Launceston dropping 16% and Cradle Coast 12%. In contrast to the strong enrolments seen for distance Indigenous students in 2020, 2021 saw a reduction in distance students of 17%.

This fall in enrolments in 2021, which was reflected across the broader UTAS domestic student population, effectively offsets an equivalent significant increase in student enrolments between 2019 and 2020 (+20% as reported last year). 2020 saw the tailoring and creation of several targeted offerings as a response to COVID-19 lockdowns, border closures and associated employment impacts, which resulted in the significant increase in enrolments for that year. With the change in circumstances in 2021, the response to these offerings was expected to decline and enrolments move back toward longer-term trends.

It must be noted that the drop in enrolments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait students (18.4%) was more substantial than the domestic student cohort (7%). This is likely due to familial and financial reasons that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are more likely to face than their non-Indigenous peers, which is particularly true for Indigenous mothers. At UTAS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (68%) enrolled in larger numbers than males (32%), which is consistent with national trends, so this factor may have had a significant impact on enrolments compared to the non-Indigenous cohort in 2021. Further, enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students under 20 years of age decreased significantly less than other age cohorts in 2021. In comparison, mature age student enrolments dropped significantly, particularly those students aged 35 and older, again this may be due to the familial obligations and financial restraints that are more prevalent within the Indigenous population.

Table 1.1¹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enrolment - Headcounts by campus, gender, age, course type and college*

Year		2020	2021	% Change
Campus	Cradle Coast	43	38	-12
	Distance	550	454	-17
	Hobart	283	222	-22
	Hong Kong	1	0	
	Launceston	148	124	-16
	Sydney/Rozelle	12	12	
	Shanghai	1	0	
	Unknown	3	0	
Gender	Male	338	266	-17
	Female	703	581	-21
	Non-Binary/Other	0	3	
Age	<20	166	164	-1
	20-24	275	227	-17
	25-29	164	120	-27
	30-34	96	82	-15
	35-39	85	59	-31
	40+	255	198	-22
Course Type	Adv. Diploma	0	2	
	Associate Degree	38	34	-11
	Bachelor's Hons	164	147	-10
	Bachelor's Pass	390	346	-11
	Diploma	216	123	-43
	Enabling course	77	45	-42
	Grad Certificate	31	39	26
	Grad Dipl new area	2	2	0
	Grad Dipl prev area	5	7	
	Master's by Crswork	58	34	-41
	Non-award course	1	0	
	Other award course	3	0	
	OUA Open Access (Non-Award)	34	26	-24
	Ph.D res./ Masters res.	21	22	5
	Undergraduate Short Course	0	21	
College	Academic Division	71	41	-42
	College of Arts, Law and Education	278	268	-4
	College of Business & Economics	252	177	-30
	College of Health & Medicine	307	265	-14
	College of Sciences & Engineering	112	77	-31
	Division of Future Students	0	0	
	Research Division	21	22	5
Total		1041	850	-18.4%

Source: University of Tasmania data analytics 2022 *Categories with fewer than 10 do not report % change

¹ 2020 data from Table 1.1 differs slightly from the 2020 ISSP performance report, as it has been revised to reflect the most up to date statistics. Further the reporting template has slightly altered to be consistent with UTAS's revised Gender, Course type, and College categories.

Enrolment strategies activities and programs

Riawunna

The Riawunna Centre's strategies are aligned with the University of Tasmania's *Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement 2021-2024*. Riawunna's programs in 2021 have included School engagement initiatives, the Riawunna community program, the Riawunna orientation program, NAIDOC week activities, open day activities, and Welcome to Country ceremonies.

The most significant new initiative from Riawunna in 2021 has been the appointment of three Aboriginal Student Advisers that work with a dedicated University College, supporting a seamless transition of students into the university environment and providing specialist targeted advice at key times in the student lifecycle to those who have been admitted into a pathway, undergraduate or postgraduate coursework program. This includes connecting students to scholarship opportunities, support services and cultural support. These positions supersede the earlier Aboriginal Student Success Officer (ASSO) roles by requiring the appointment of Indigenous people who have completed at least an undergraduate degree, as well as embedding of the role within College programs. Prior to this, the ASSO operated from the Riawunna Centre and did not have the degree of engagement with College teaching and support teams and activities.

Table 1.2 2021 Riawunna ISSP Scholarships/Bursaries

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling							-	0
Undergraduate	50,625	14					50,625	14
Post-graduate	5,000	1					5,000	1
Other							-	0
Total	55,625	15	-	0	-	0	55,625	15

Source: University of Tasmania Scholarships Office 2021

In 2021, the continuation of vital scholarships and bursaries saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students receive significant financial and academic support to study. These awards are offered across a wide range of disciplines and selection is based on academic merit and/or financial need. The two most prominent Scholarships awarded were the Riawunna wurakara to Higher Education Bursary (8 scholarships awarded), and the Riawunna palanawina Accommodation and Living Allowance Scholarship (6 scholarships awarded).

Table 1.3 2021 Riawunna scholarships breakdown

Award	Description	Period	Amount
Riawunna Access Bursary	3 Bursaries	Awarded every semester	Up to \$1,000
Riawunna Postgraduate Scholarship	1 Scholarship	Awarded annually	\$5,000
Riawunna West North West Bursary	1 Bursary	Awarded annually	\$5,000
Takamuna Scholarship for Accommodation	scholarships	Awarded each semester	Up to \$4,000
Takamuna Scholarship for Education Costs	scholarships	Awarded each semester	Up to 2,5000
Tunapri rrala Scholarship for Tasmanian Aboriginal students	1 scholarship	Awarded annually	\$10,000
Riawunna wurakara to Higher Education Bursary	8 scholarships	Awarded annually	\$1,000 for year 11 and 12 and \$5,000 per year for 3 to 4 years at University
Riawunna palanawina Accommodation and Living Allowance Scholarship	6 scholarships	Awarded annually	\$12,000 per year for University accommodation balance to Living Allowance for 3 to 4 years.

Source: University of Tasmania Riawunna data/ Scholarships Office 2021

Strategies to support Students during COVID-19: Case study – The Murina program

Murina Information sessions provided potential students the opportunity to visit Riawunna to hear about Murina Program support and pathways, meet the team and familiarise with the Riawunna environment. Murina Information Sessions were held across the three regions through zoom and face to face in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

In 2021, the Murina Program built upon on the successful transition to online learning experienced in 2020 due to COVID-19. Despite the epidemic-related issues, the Murina coordinators were able to successfully deliver a rich and engaging blended delivery program for students and maintain critical pedagogy of sharing Aboriginal knowledges and strengthening students' pathway into further education. Eight of the fifteen Murina students enrolled in 2021 (53%), expressed an interest to continue their studies into 2022. Four of these students enrolled in semester 1, 2022, with the remaining four students considering undergraduate study in semester 2.

A formal research project was also undertaken to better understand the influence of the COVID-19 environment on the Murina program by the Co-ordinator, Jodi Haines. This resulted in a peer reviewed publication:

Haines, J., & Baker, W. (2021). Australian Aboriginal Education: The impacts of Riawunna's Murina program pedagogy during COVID-19. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching*, 4(2).

Community Engagement



Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer Brendan Murray with students at Marist Regional College, Burnie

To further assist in improving university access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples in Tasmania, Riawunna's Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers worked with Aboriginal families and community members, Aboriginal organisations, service providers, Aboriginal Health Services, Closing the Gap consultations, TasTAFE, and Tasmanian Legal Aid, engaging and building relationships with the services and programs of Riawunna. In response to COVID-19 the Community Engagement Officers conducted limited face to face contact and used social media and emails to communicate. Outreach in 2021 was further impacted by Sorry Business and health and wellbeing issues. However, the community engagement officers were still able to contact and engage with over 550 Community members across the state (see table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Community engagement with families and individuals

Region	Number contacted
North	140
Northwest	275
South	156
Total	571

Source: Riawunna data collection 2021

Postgraduate access support

The Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal Leadership (OPVCAL) continued to provide dedicated support to postgraduate Indigenous students. Due to COVID-19, there was limited face to face outreach in 2021, however the Office continued to encourage undergraduates each semester to consider applying for entry to higher degrees by research and coursework. Additionally, the Office directly assisted students in developing initial research plans for HDR study, including linking them with potential supervisors, and then fully assisting them to enrol and/or apply for scholarships.

The most substantial change for 2021 for postgraduate support was the approval of additional funding for HDR scholarships in order to address the low number of applicants. Specifically, the award amount for the Japanangka Erol West Scholarship was increased by approximately 40% with supplementary ISSP funding and is now one of the most attractive Indigenous scholarships in Australia, worth approx. \$50,000 annually. This resulted in attracting a high achieving Aboriginal student for the first time in 3 years, who was approved to start in semester 1, 2022.

2. Progression (outcomes)

Riawunna

The Riawunna Centre provides several strategies, activities and programs to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students to maintain progress in their studies in 2021. These included dedicated support from the Riawunna Student Wellbeing Counsellor, Aboriginal Student Advisors support, the Riawunna tutoring program, the Riawunna Financial Hardship Scheme, as well as maintaining an effective communications strategy with students to keep them aware of support and assistance they can access throughout the year.

The Riawunna Counsellor

The Riawunna Counsellor provided dedicated support for the health and wellbeing of eighteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with twenty-eight referrals to support students with study extensions, remissions and Riawunna information. The Riawunna Counsellor facilitated several health and wellbeing activities to support students in their studies and to maintain a sense of belonging at the University. The activities included yarning circles, and Dreamtime story and clap stick engraving. Further, in response to COVID-19, the Aboriginal Counsellor provided options for students

to participate online and by telephone, including presenting virtual workshops. Students also had options to access personal counselling either face to face, telephone or by zoom.

Table 2.1 Dedicated roles to support Indigenous student success at the University of Tasmania in 2021

Position	Level	Location
Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Engagement		
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Engagement	Academic E	State-wide – Hobart
Aboriginal Digital Engagement Officer	HEO7	State-wide – Hobart
Aboriginal Student Success Project Officer	HEO6	Hobart
Riawunna Centre		
Head of Service, Riawunna Centre	HEO9	State-wide – Hobart
Coordinator, Murina Program	Academic B	State-wide – Hobart
Lecturer, Murina program	Academic A	State-wide - Launceston
Aboriginal Counsellor & Development Officer	HEO7	State-wide – Launceston
Aboriginal Student Advisor	HEO6	Hobart
Aboriginal Student Advisor	HEO6	Hobart
Aboriginal Student Advisor	HEO6	Launceston
Community Engagement Officer	HEO4	Hobart
Community Engagement Officer	HEO4	Launceston
Community Engagement Officer	HEO4	Burnie
Administrative Officer	HEO4	Hobart
Administrative Officer	HEO4	Launceston
Tasmanian Institute of learning and Teaching		
Aboriginal Higher Education Advisor	Academic D	State-wide – Hobart
People and Wellbeing		
Talent Acquisition Partner	HEO6	State-wide – Launceston/Burnie

Note: all occupants of ISSP funded roles identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Source: University of Tasmania, Office of the PVC Aboriginal Leadership 2021

Aboriginal Student Advisers

A revised role developed in 2020 to replace Aboriginal Student Support Officers, the Aboriginal Student Adviser (ASA) is instrumental in maintaining progress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Embedded in College-based student services teams, the ASAs provide a more seamless approach to student support by providing a discipline-oriented support framework and practical support to engage students throughout their academic journey. Utilising the Student Advice and Mentoring Program (SAM), they contact Aboriginal students to welcome and connect them with

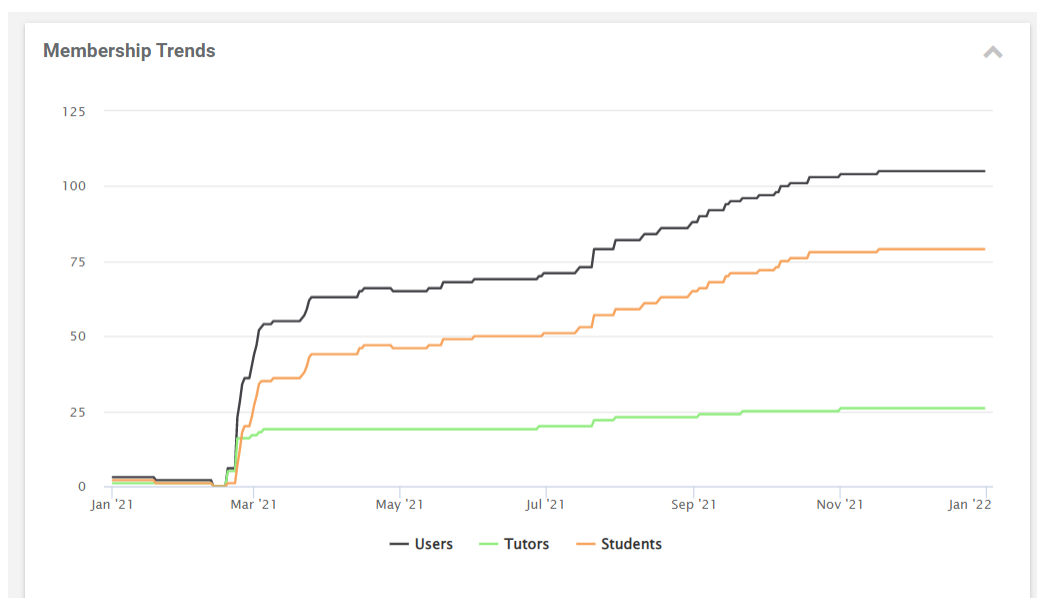
services delivered by Colleges and supplemented by Riawunna. These include Uni Start, Studiosity, and ensuring awareness and access to the Safe and Fair Community Unit. The ASAs also invite students into the Riawunna Centres to meet with other Aboriginal students and staff and access cultural support. The ASAs assisted in facilitating linkages to support other school activities, strong relationship building skills and networking, and developing a shared understanding of community needs and continual learning. ASAs work in partnership with the Future Students Team, meeting monthly to share and attend UTAS Expos at Colleges across the three regions.

Further, in 2021 the ASAs provided one-on-one specialist student support to facilitate seamless transitions across the University environment. Working with College partners ensures Aboriginal student retention and progression is supported, monitored and appropriate early interventions facilitated, and that all interactions are appropriately recorded to enable ongoing, high quality and personalised support and continuous improvement within an Aboriginal cultural support framework.

Riawunna Tutoring Program

The Riawunna Tutoring Program is delivered through an online platform for students and tutors to connect with each other. [Riawunna’s online Tutoring Program](#) creates and maintains a positive experience for students, tutors, and administrators, improving efficiencies in time and resource management. This resulted in a steady increase in students receiving tutoring through the program over the 2021 period (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Riawunna tutoring membership (student participation)



Source: Riawunna data collection 2021

Table 2.3 2021 Tutorial Assistance

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ⁶	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ⁷	Total hours of assistance ⁸	Expenditure ⁹
Enabling	20	166	492	\$ 24,531.00
Undergraduate	49	525	2024	\$ 93,763.00
Postgraduate	14	249	274	\$ 25,376.00
Other	0	0	0	\$ -
total	83	940	2,790	\$ 143,670.00

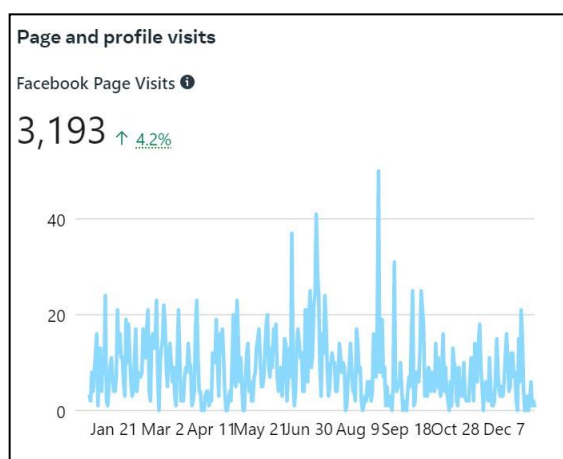
Source: University of Tasmania, Scholarships Office 2021

Communications

Riawunna maintained regular contact with students, staff, and Aboriginal Community through a variety of channels promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarships, cadetships, employment opportunities, Indigenous Apprenticeship Program from State and Australian Governments and other service providers. Communications included face-to-face, student portal, word of mouth, social media, bulk emails and notice boards. The student portal is an effective channel to update information about services, programs, and cultural connections.

One long-running communications initiative is the Riawunna Facebook page. Riawunna continued to grow its online presence through social media, promoting events, university and student updates to students, staff, and the broader community. 2021 saw an increase of 12.4% in page likes and a 4.2% increase in page visits. During the year, this social media presence was supplemented by the establishment of a Riawunna Instagram account.

Figure 2.4 Riawunna Facebook Visits 2021



Source: Riawunna data collection 2021

Postgraduate progress support

In 2021, the OPVCAL continued to provide regular support to Indigenous HDR students in order to minimise withdrawals and ensure successful progression. The two main support initiatives were in the form of supplementary funding and Workshops run by the PVC AL for our Aboriginal HDR students. The supplementary funding comprises two funding initiatives: a general top up scholarship (up to \$5000) to assist with specific requirements that occur during candidature, including IT hardware, temporary accommodation assistance for on-campus activity, as well as a conference attendance scholarship (worth up to \$5000).

The OPVCAL usually runs face to face workshops twice a year for our Indigenous HDR students. However, due to the restraints of COVID-19, only one workshop was run in 2021. This workshop focused on the importance and benefits of publishing during HDR studies, with 5 students attending. Further, the Office provides administrative support for students and their supervisors. It does this through collaboration with UTAS' Graduate Research Office monthly, to ascertain the status of our HDR candidates, identifying where roadblocks are, and determine where, and how our HDR students can be best supported in progressing their HDR studies. Additionally regular correspondence and personal contact with HDR students is maintained through a dedicated Project Officer.

A new initiative to support Indigenous postgraduates at UTAS, planned for 2022, is to provide supplementary funding (up to \$5000 for successful applicants) for coursework postgraduates. Additionally Postgraduate coursework students will see more support from the PVCAL in 2022, through systematic communications, so that coursework students are provided with similar support opportunities to that available for HDR students.

Cultural competency at UTAS in 2021



Community members and staff at the opening of West Park campus, 2021

All new staff to UTAS are invited to participate in our cultural awareness program Come Walk with Us. Two face-to-face sessions are arranged annually for staff. In addition, online resources are available for staff to access, supporting Indigenising their teaching content. The Come Walk with Us program is a core element for students in all health-related courses, including Social Work, Nursing, Pharmacy, Environmental Health Science, Medicine, Sports Science and Para- medicine.

To measure the success of this program, feedback evaluations are completed after each session. The overall feedback is positive with students gaining deeper insight into the impact of past policies on current health status and the need for them to become advocates for change to redress racism.

In addition to the Come Walk with us initiative, in 2021, all new academic staff at UTAS were introduced to Aboriginal Business at the University through a representative of the OPVCAL. This introduction occurs whenever an Academic staff induction is taking place, where the representative gives an overview of Aboriginal leadership, particularly in the areas of curricular Indigenisation, and Indigenous research ethics at UTAS. The Office also supports any new Academic staff who are engaging in curricular Indigenisation, in terms of linking them up with Indigenous academics and/or advisors where applicable.

3. Completions (outcomes)

Overview of completions in 2021

The strategies that Riawunna has implemented to improve award course completions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for 2021 has been characterised by a comprehensive and integrated approach to service delivery by the Riawunna team. The most significant new strategy to support student completions in 2021 was the on-boarding of the Aboriginal Student Advisers (ASAs) and embedding their services into the University's Colleges. The ASAs provided Colleges with Aboriginal expertise as an integral part of their support teams, significantly increasing visibility of Aboriginal culture within the Colleges. The impact of this initiative will be measured during 2022.

It can be noted from Table 3.1 there was a substantial increase in Distance student completions from 2020 compared to 2021, although completions for on campus students saw significant declines. There was a slight increase in female completions, but a significant decline for males. In terms of ages, mature age students aged 30 and older saw an increase in completions compared to 2020, this was not the case for younger students. In terms of colleges, the College of Health and Medicine saw a significant increase in completions from 2020 to 2021, this contrasted with the College of Business and Economics and the College of Sciences and Engineering, where decreases are observed.

Table 3.1² Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student completions*

Completions		2020	2021	% change
Campus	Cradle Coast	6	11	
	Distance	35	51	+46%
	Hobart	54	31	-43%
	Launceston	29	23	-21%
	Other	1	3	
Gender	Female	78	82	+5%
	Male	47	37	-21%
Age	<20	7	7	
	20-24	62	52	-16%
	25-29	29	16	-45%
	30-34	6	12	+50%
	35-39	9	8	
	40+	12	24	+50%
College	Academic Division	1	0	
	College of Arts, Law and Education	32	34	+6%
	College of Business & Economics	38	27	-29%
	College of Health & Medicine	30	42	+29%
	College of Sciences & Engineering	24	14	-42%
	Division of Future Students	0	0	
	Research Division	0	2	
Total		126	119	-6%

Source: Data Analytics, University of Tasmania May 2020.

*categories with fewer than 10 enrolments do not report % change.

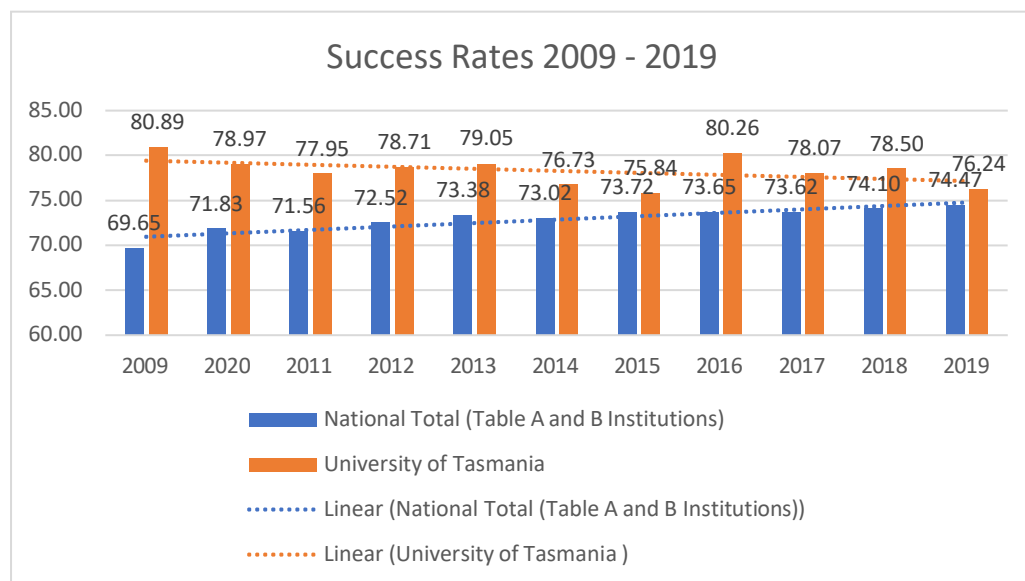
In response to the challenges being experienced by students, additional opportunities were provided for professional development of Riawunna staff, to build their capabilities and skills to be more effective when working with students, staff, and the Community. The Riawunna team's individual efforts, and the inclusion of new staff, seeks to make a positive impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University of Tasmania. Their work remains instrumental in increasing the visibility of Aboriginal culture, history, and heritage of Aboriginal people on campus state-wide. However, while the enhancement of Aboriginal Community access and cultural safety at the University is important, completion by Indigenous students in award programs remains a critical measure of success.

A comparative measure of completion is made through tracking the success rate and success ratio of Indigenous students. The success rate measures academic performance by determining the number of units passed out of all units attempted. Figure 3.2 shows that a steady improvement of 4.82% in the success rate for Indigenous students has occurred nationally since 2009. In Tasmania, this **rate has fallen** by 4.65% over the same period. To take into consideration changes in Indigenous enrolments (Table 1.1), these success rates are divided by the success rate of non-Indigenous students to create the success ratio. If the success ratio is less than 1.00, it indicates that Indigenous students are not achieving the same academic performance as their non-Indigenous peers. Figure 3.3 indicates a

² Official data for 2021 completions is not yet available as this data was compiled prior to the release of official government data. As such this data is subject to change.

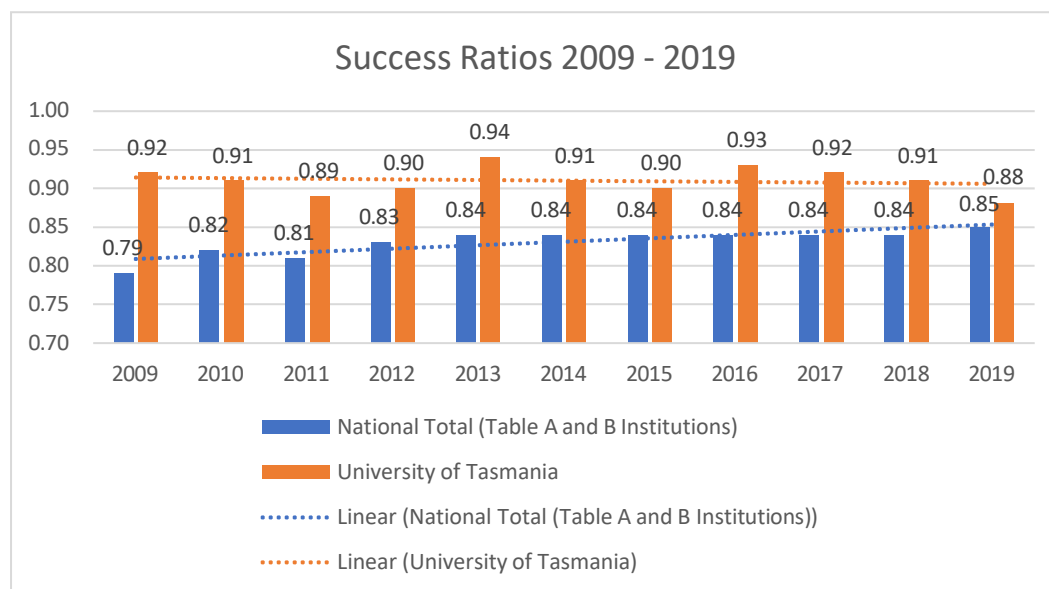
national improvement of 0.06 in success ratio for Indigenous students during the same period. In Tasmania, the ratio decreased by 0.04.

Figure 3.2 Indigenous Student Success Rate 2008-2019: University of Tasmania Rate/National



Source: Department of Education and Training (2020): Table 16.8: Equity - Success Rates for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2019 Data includes students studying at all award course levels. 2020 data not available at time of report.

Figure 3.3 Indigenous Success Ratio 2009-2019: University of Tasmania/National Total



Source: Department of Education and Training (2020): Table 16.8: Equity - Success Rates for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2019. Data includes students studying at all award course levels. 2020 data not available at time of report.

Higher Degrees

Figure 3.3 indicates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in Higher Degree studies. Since 2016 there has been a sustained net increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR enrolments. In 2021 there were 21 HDR candidates, just 4 below the target of 25.

Figure 3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR enrolments 2015 -2021

Course Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Masters by Research	3	3	3	5	9	10	10
PhD	6	14	13	11	11	13	12
Total HDR	9	17	16	16	21	23	22

Source: Data Analytics, University of Tasmania 2021

Higher Degree Programs

The Office of the PVC Aboriginal Leadership offers a number of higher degree support programs through the Graduate Research Office to increase the number of Indigenous graduates with research masters and doctoral degrees, and actively encourages staff to undertake further training concurrent to their present role. Alongside efforts to encourage undergraduate students with research training through mentoring and scholarship opportunities, HDR workshops will again be offered to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as COVID-19 restrictions on travel diminish.

Research Higher Degree Scholarships

The Japanangka errol West Scholarship is offered annually and supports an Indigenous graduate who has demonstrated excellent results in their honours year. No award was made in 2021, however, an extended round resulted in a recommendation for a candidate to commence in 2022.

Four Senior Indigenous Scholarships are offered biannually to recognise Indigenous people who have made a significant contribution to Aboriginal community development through professional or research-related activity but may not have had access to conventional pathways to higher degrees. Special entry is available to a Masters by Research degree, or a Doctoral degree if the applicant meets the requirements of the School for admission.

The objective of this HDR Scholarship (3 years for PhD, 2 years for MRes), is to strengthen Aboriginal engagement at the University of Tasmania by supporting higher degree research projects of importance and providing opportunity for senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake higher degree research projects of importance to Aboriginal communities, particularly palawa and pakana people of Tasmania. This initiative provides a supportive pathway for Indigenous research, with supervision from experienced Aboriginal researchers tailored to the individual needs of the candidate, ongoing skill-development workshops, and a generous stipend (\$40,000pa) for the duration of the candidature.

In 2019, 4 Senior Indigenous Scholarships were awarded. Topics being addressed by current scholars include:

- Aboriginal women and coastal marine resources
- Biography of Dalrymple Briggs
- Curating Tasmanian Aboriginal Art
- Human Development Models and Treaty-making

The program has been an outstanding success, with all candidates progressing successfully to Confirmation, and two Master by Research admissions successfully applying for conversion to a PhD program. No scholarship round was offered in 2021. A new round will be opened in 2022.

Predocctoral Fellowships

The Indigenous Predocctoral Pathways program awards fellowships to Indigenous PhD candidates who have commenced their research. Developed in collaboration with targeted schools and with ongoing support from the Colleges of Arts Law and Education, these are offered at Academic level A or B, depending on experience, and are 60% ISSP funded for three years. After this time, the host School provides 100% (UTAS) funding for continuing employment. Negotiations for additional Fellowships in the College of Arts Law and Education were successful in 2021, resulting in Fellowships being created in Law and Creative Arts for 2022. The first Indigenous Fellowships in the College of Science and Engineering, and the University Library were also agreed in 2021, and will be advertised in 2022. This is a key initiative for increasing the University's Indigenous academic workforce.

Figure 3.4 Office of the PVC Aboriginal Leadership Higher Degree by Research Initiatives

HDR Initiative	2021	2021 Expenditure \$
Japanangka errol West Scholarship	1 Scholarship awarded	Commencing 2022
Senior Indigenous Scholarships	4 Scholarships in progress	266,631
Predocctoral Pathways	1 Criminology Fellowship 1 Social Work Fellowship 1 Education Fellowship	302,620
	1 Law Fellowship 1 Cultural Collections Fellowship 1 Spatial Sciences Fellowship 1 Creative Arts Fellowship	Commencing 2022
Total		\$569,251

Source: University of Tasmania, Office of the PVC Aboriginal Leadership 2021

Other HDR initiatives

Other supplementary scholarships include the Aboriginal Higher Degree by Research Candidate Supplementary Funding (full-time only) \$5,000 and the Conference attendance & research skills development bursaries (full-time only) up to \$5,000. Alongside scholarships, HDR students are invited to participate in HDR workshops. Given COVID-19 circumstances we were restricted from providing face-to-face HDR workshops. These will resume in 2022. While these workshops are optional, they are delivered by leading Indigenous academics and have included: Research Presentation and Networking; Indigenous Methods and Methodologies; and writing workshops.

The Office of the PVC Aboriginal Leadership keeps in regular contact with our HDR candidates as well as potential HDR students to help and provide encouragement and support wherever required. This includes communicating personal development opportunities, and scholarship opportunities.

4. Regional and remote students

All areas of Tasmania are classified as regional. Riawunna’s Aboriginal Student Advisors and the Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers support students by connecting them to Riawunna services and other student support programs. Face to face outreach was restricted in 2021.

Table 2021 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2020 Payments	\$ 48,750.00	10					\$ 48,750.00	10
B. 2021 Offers ¹¹	\$ 60,500.00	16	\$ 8,000.00	1			\$ 68,500.00	17
C. Percentage ¹²								
(C=B/A*100)								
2021 Payments	\$ 55,500.00	15	\$ -	0				

Source: University of Tasmania, Scholarships Office 2021

5. Eligibility criteria

Indigenous Education Strategy

The University of Tasmania’s Indigenous Education Strategy, the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement 2021-2024 (SPAЕ) is the foundational guiding document for the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. During 2020-21 a broad-ranging review of the SPAЕ was completed and implementation commenced. COVID-19 disrupted a range of implementation tasks, restricting our ability to report on newly established performance indicators.

This Strategic Plan is the second document of its kind at the University of Tasmania, and as such, seeks to both continue successful initiatives for Indigenous people across the University, as well as introduce new initiatives. The 2021-2024 SPAЕ builds on the foundations of the inaugural Plan, continues successful initiatives, and addresses gaps in implementation; targeting strategic growth areas and serving as a framework for the development of Action Plans across the University to translate aspirations into tangible and positive outcomes for students, staff, and community.

Several actions in the new SPAЕ have been developed to contribute to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UTAS; promoting the Indigenisation of curricula, graduate attributes, and teaching practices; as well as improving the cultural competency of all Utas staff and students.

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers

The SPAЕ emphasises the need to continue to deliver high-quality services through the Riawunna

Centre to maximise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success. These services include

community engagement, pathways and enabling programs, scholarships, supplementary tuition, and personalised support. Successful student support is based on strength-based approaches to academic engagement and achievement. To further enhance student success, there are several priority actions that were implemented during 2021:

- Aspirational engagement with pre-tertiary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, including: close networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in late primary and secondary schools and their families by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with successful experience of higher education in collaboration with school teaching and support staff; and to monitor progress and aspiration, design individualised pathways into university courses, and facilitate enrolments. The OPVCAL commenced a research project to better understand the characteristics of Indigenous students in schools and the aspirations of Indigenous families. This will continue in 2022 and inform support program development and allocation of ISSP funding.
- Enhancing service provision through Riawunna by increasing the number of support staff with relevant tertiary graduate experience. This occurred in 2021 with the appointment of three Aboriginal Student Advisors utilising selection criteria requiring completion of a degree.
- The prioritising of academic skills development for Indigenous students including tailored support through the Riawunna tutoring program, HDR support through the OPVCAL, and the creation of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Society, based on partnership model between staff and student leadership, to facilitate academic, along with cultural and social participation at UTAS.

The principle thrust of implementation of the revised SPAE in 2021 has been to embed Indigenous business in the University, facilitating an institution-wide approach to student engagement and success. Progressing implementation in 2022 will involve the creation of Action Plans in each College, informed by an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy developed by Schools and Colleges.

Curricular Indigenisation

Embedding Indigenous knowledges and epistemes throughout the University will create an environment where Indigenous peoples feel safe and welcomed. The University of Tasmania aims to be one of Australia's leading higher education institutions in its development and delivery of Indigenous knowledge and cultural perspectives across curricula. All graduates need to be competent to critically engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture and experience. To achieve this, we will increase the number of Indigenous staff and knowledge holders available to support student learning across all relevant disciplines. This will boost the capability of Colleges to ensure that our courses are sensitive to, and inclusive of Indigenous knowledges, enabling 50% of first year undergraduate students to complete an assessment item on Indigenous knowledge and culture relevant to their discipline by December 2024.

There are several initiatives within the SPAE dedicated to the Indigenisation of curricula, graduate attributes, and teaching practise. These include:

- The creation of Curriculum Indigenisation working groups in 2022 to guide course development across all disciplines. Resources are provided by the OPVCAL to each College to support systematic audits of Indigenous content and perspectives across all undergraduate and graduate courses, assessing quality and identifying requirements for staff development and embedding of relevant content.

- Collaboration and sharing of resources requires annual dialogue facilitated by Colleges across their Schools on embedding Indigenous content within their curricula, with emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches that best recognise Indigenous epistemes. Outcomes will be monitored through Academic Senate with advice from the OPVCAL.
- Course development focused on Indigenous contexts - Schools will identify opportunities to revise existing course content and develop new units focussed on the history, culture, knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with particular focus on palawa/pakana (Tasmanian Aboriginal) people and informed by broader international Indigenous contexts. In consultation with Riawunna, Colleges will increase the number of Aboriginal knowledge sharers available to support Schools with inclusion of Aboriginal cultural perspectives across curricula.
- Indigenous representation and leadership - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on Course Advisory Committees will be increased and led by these staff wherever possible. Schools will be supported by the OPVCAL to reviewing and incorporate Indigenous scholarship and supported by the Riawunna Centre to engage with palawa/pakana perspectives.
- Inclusion and participation of Indigenous students - College staff will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni and students enrolled in their courses to ensure that course content acknowledges and responds to their cultural needs.

Cultural competency

The University is also committed to developing diverse collaborative relationships with palawa/pakana and Gadigal/Wangal communities that support initiatives to acknowledge, preserve and present Indigenous knowledges and histories for the benefit of those communities. This will require ongoing capacity-building led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, in collaboration with University colleagues.

To ensure the advancement of cultural competency of all university stakeholders, there are several initiatives to be actioned over the life of the SPAE that were developed in 2021. These include:

- Ensuring that cultural training will available for staff at the University and a requirement for priority roles. All staff and students entering the University community will have opportunities to undertake initial and periodic refreshment training. On Country cultural experiences have been developed at the University's Cradle Coast Campus during 2021, and will be expended to other campuses during 2022. The College of Science and Engineering (CoSE), through a University-funded Aboriginal Engagement Officer role, developed and delivered a cultural awareness training program in 2021.
- Ensuring On Country experiences will be an essential component of the experience of all staff and students at the University through either virtual or actual participation. Online cultural experiences have been developed as part of 2021 Orientation packages for students and will be refreshed in 2022.
- The development of a Cultural protocol frameworks to inform guidelines and procedures relating to eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and services; interpretation and representation of Indigenous culture on campus; incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives across curricula; use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and treatment of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property in teaching and research. Guidelines for Eligibility for Identified positions at the University were established during 2021. These guidelines will be extended to include eligibility for high value student support programs in 2022.

- ‘Connection to Place and Culture’ is one of the core themes of the University’s Community Experience Model, which was implemented during 2021. This involves providing all staff and students with opportunities to explore understanding of place and deepening appreciation for the richness of Tasmanian Aboriginal history, culture and knowledges, and more broadly, the strength of diversity.

Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The University continues to strive towards a 3% Indigenous workforce target. However, despite initiatives to increase recruitment, especially of Indigenous Academic staff, the proportion of Indigenous staff at the University remains at less than half the desired target.

Table 5.1 Indigenous employment data snapshot 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Minimum Target
Total Aboriginal Staff Number (total *headcount including ongoing, fixed term)	38	38	37	38	36	3%
Total number of staff as at 31 December	2655	2983	3001	2861	2922	
Percentage	1.43%	1.27%	1.23%	1.32%	1.23%	

* Headcount data do not include casual staff

In order to address workforce objectives in a systematic way, the *Aboriginal Employment Plan 2021-2024* (AEP) was endorsed by the University Executive in December 2020 and implementation commenced in 2021. The AEP has four key strategic priority areas, which include:

- supporting workplace environment and wellbeing by identifying the need for a culturally safe and inclusive workplace;
- increasing the number of Indigenous staff at the University by 3% by 2024, with a range of key initiatives designed to assist building our Indigenous workforce;
- building a connected community to ensure the AEP is successful by engaging with key contributors from within the University network to provide expertise and input; and
- provision of resources and funding by delivering a range of functions and roles that will assist in facilitating workforce participation.

Indigenous specific career development scholarship funds are available to fixed term and permanent Indigenous employees for the provision of work-related training, support to attend and present at conferences, workplace workshops and individual career enhancement opportunities. We continue to support increasing the number of early career research positions.

Table 5.1 2021 Indigenous workforce

Level/position	Permanent		Casual/contract/fixed-term	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
1TR PVC - Aboriginal Leadership			1	
Academic D - Associate Professor	2			
Academic C – Senior Lecturer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Education	1			
Academic C – Indigenous Senior Research Fellow, Academic Development	1			
Academic B – Indigenous Fellow, Academic Development	2		1	
Academic B – Aboriginal Research Fellow	1			
Academic B - Lecturer in Paramedicine	1			
Academic B – Lecturer and Teaching-Intensive Scholars in Bioscience	1			
Academic B – Lecturer, Riawunna	1			
Academic A – Associate Lecturer, Riawunna			1	
HEO Level 10 – Manager Workplace Diversity and Inclusion		1		
HEO Level 9 – Head of Service, Riawunna		1		
HEO Level 8 – People and Wellbeing Business Partner		1		
HEO Level 7 Aboriginal Digital Engagement Officer				1
HEO Level 7 – Riawunna Wellbeing Development Counsellor		1		
HEO Level 7 - Aboriginal Education and Strategy Officer & HEO Level 6 - Senior Tech Officer **				1
HEO Level 6 - Project Officer		1		
HEO Level 6 - Learning and Research Librarian		1		
HEO Level 6 - Aboriginal Student Advisor		1		2
HEO Level 6 - Contracted Services Administrator (Grounds and Maintenance)		1		
HEO Level 6 - Facilities Technical Officer South - Plumber		1		
HEO Level 6 - Talent Acquisition Partner				1
HEO Level 6 - Exhibitions and Program Coordinator & HEO Level 4 - Administration Officer - Art Operations**		1		
HEO Level 6 - Executive Officer - NRAS (Hbt)		1		
HEO Level 5 - Aboriginal Student Success Officer				1
HEO Level 5 - Elite Athlete & Competition Coordinator		1		
HEO Level 5 - Client Services Officer (IT)		1		
HEO Level 4 - Administrative Officer		1		1
HEO Level 4 - Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer				2
Casuals			1	7
Total	10	14	4	16

Source: University of Tasmania, People and Wellbeing data 2021

In 2021, a new position of Talent Acquisition Partner Aboriginal Employment was created, and an Aboriginal person was appointed to the role of Manager of Diversity and Inclusion. These are full time positions, representing a substantial commitment to Aboriginal workforce development by the University. The Talent Acquisition Partner role is currently funded as an ISSP strategic initiative, with the objective of it becoming a University funded continuing position in 2022.

To date, four Indigenous Fellow, Academic Development Level B positions and one Indigenous Senior Research Fellow Academic Development Level C have been created in the College of Arts, Law and Education and Health and Medicine with other offerings available in 2022. These positions provide employees with the opportunity to complete their PhD whilst working in areas of academia. We also have one, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Education Level C position. Professor Greg Lehman was appointed in January 2019 to the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal Leadership.

Transactionally, the 2021 calendar year provided a range of positive staff movements, including two new academic and six professional appointments, one academic promotion and two professional promotions, with one staff member transferring to a new role within the University. With the impact of COVID-19, voluntary redundancy and early retirement offerings were provided to staff with two staff resigning, one involuntary redundancy, two voluntary redundancies and three retirements taken by Indigenous employees. 2022 will see a suite of initiatives including the 'growing our own talent', register, student employment opportunities, specialised talent recruitment personnel and continued support for career progression for current staff. Given the timing of this report, it is also important to note that many contracts cease at the end of the year and academic casuals are not working at this time.

Table 5.2 Indigenous Staff Turnover 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Overall Ave FTE	23	28	29	33	33
UTAS Head Count Terminated	4	5	8	7	8
Percentage	17%	18%	28%	21%	24%

Source: University of Tasmania Data Analytics 2021

Table 5.2 shows that there continues to be a high turn-over of Indigenous staff at the University of Tasmania, at approximately twice the rate of separation for all staff. The increase in terminations in 2021 has been significantly influenced by an abnormally high number of COVID-19 related early retirements and redundancies.

ISSP Governance Committee

The University of Tasmania implemented a specific ISSP Indigenous Governance Mechanism in 2017 to meet Clauses 10 and 11 of the ISSP Guidelines. All members have extensive experience in Indigenous higher education and were appointed in January 2017, with some additions in 2021. Professor Lehman was appointed as Chair in January 2020.

Prof Greg Lehman	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Leadership, Academic Division
Assoc Prof Clair Andersen	Aboriginal Higher Education Advisor, Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching, Academic Division
Ms Caroline Spotswood	Head of Service, Riawunna Centre, Student Experience, Academic Division
Ms Jacinta Vanderfeen	People and Wellbeing (replaced by Tara Bailey in 2021)
Dr Jennifer Evans	Aboriginal Research Fellow, Rural Clinical School Aboriginal
Dr Jacob Prehn	Fellow, School of Social Science
Mr Rob Anders	Aboriginal Professional Staff, School of Geography and Spatial Sciences
Ms Stephanie Taylor	Executive Director, Student Experience, Academic Division
Mr Russell Pockett	Management Accountant, Financial Services (Non-Voting member – replaced by Gareth Wilkinson in 2022)
Mr Chris Dillon	Manager, Scholarships, Prizes & Academic Scheduling, Student Operations (Non-Voting member – replaced by David Rose in 2022)

The University of Tasmania ISSP Governance Committee met nine times during 2021 and meeting procedures and decision-making processes were consistent with the ISSP Governance Committee Terms of Reference. The Governance Committee is chaired by the PVC Aboriginal Leadership and seven of the eight voting members are Aboriginal staff members.

The primary role of the ISSP Governance Committee is to make decisions on how ISSP funding is used within the University. All ISSP funding allocations come before the Governance Committee. Applications for funding require a program/initiative description, budget, timeframe, expected outcomes and account of how the program/initiative meets ISSP Guidelines. Decisions on funding are made by consensus.










An Aboriginal Leadership Group including Professor Lehman, Associate Professor Andersen and Ms Spotswood manage and approve operational matters, including allocation of scholarships and bursaries.

A key recommendation of the SPAE Review is that an Indigenous person be appointed to the University Council at the earliest opportunity.

An independent review of Riawunna was commenced in late 2021 and will report in early 2022.

Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The University of Tasmania Indigenous Student Success Programme Governance Committee was involved in the preparation of this performance report and acquittal report. The following members of the University of Tasmania ISSP Governance Committee have read this report and approve its submission as the formal 2021 ISSP Performance Report and Acquittal Report for the University of Tasmania.

Name	Signature	Date
Greg Lehman		23 April 2022
Caroline Spotswood		25 April 2022
Tara Bailey		29 April 2022
Clair Andersen		28 April 2022
Jacob Prehn		03 April 2022
Rob Anders		4 May 2022
Steph Taylor		3 May 2022
David Rose		
Gareth Wilkinson		27 April 2022
Jennifer Evans		2 May 2022