



Indigenous Workforce Strategy

2026 – 2030



Flinders
University

FEARLESS



About the Artist and the Artwork

Elizabeth Yanyi Close

Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara, 2020

The artwork both explores Connection to Country and speaks to the Landscape around Flinders University, but it also deeply explores and speaks to the concept of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people travelling to undertake their studies bringing with them knowledge, wisdom and understanding of their own Language Groups and standing together as one.

Elizabeth passed away in 2026, and Flinders University acknowledges her profound contribution to our community with deep respect and sadness. With the permission and guidance of her family, the University continues to honour her legacy by respectfully using her artwork across our campuses and strategic documents. We recognise the cultural significance of her work and pay tribute to her enduring impact, her artistic leadership, and the stories she entrusted to us.

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our campuses are located across South Australia and the Northern Territory. These lands are home to the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South East, First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman, and Yolngu peoples.

We honour the enduring connection of these Nations to Country, culture, and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present, whose wisdom continues to guide us.

We extend our deepest thanks to Kurna Elder Uncle Lewis Yarlupurka O'Brien, Arrernte Elder Auntie Pat Miller AO, and Larrakia Elder Uncle Richie Fejo for their generosity in sharing cultural knowledge and insight. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Indigenous Elders, staff, and students whose voices and leadership have shaped our strategy and strengthened our shared journey toward reconciliation.

We walk together with Indigenous peoples, learning from the world's oldest continuing cultures as we create new futures.

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Message from Chief People Officer

The Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2026–2030 aims to promote Flinders University as a destination employer and builds on a long continuum of work grounded in respect, truth telling, and the recognition of Indigenous leadership, knowledges, and self-determination.

It follows the achievements and lessons of earlier iterations and aligns with the broader commitments of Flinders University's Strategic Plan Agenda 2035. *Impact. With Purpose.*, the *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan*, and Indigenous Research Strategy. Together, these frameworks reinforce that Indigenous advancement is a whole of university responsibility, embedded in governance, culture, and everyday practices. The strategy acknowledges the progress made in strengthening Indigenous employment, cultural safety, targeted pathways, and leadership representation. It also recognises the unfinished work.

Grounded in relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility, the **Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2026–2030** sets the direction for the next five years through a framework that embeds cultural safety, strengthens development pathways, and elevates Indigenous leadership across all levels of the University.

Through this strategy, Flinders University affirms its enduring commitment to creating an environment where Indigenous staff can thrive and grow, succeed, and enact their cultural, professional, and community responsibilities with pride. It is a commitment to building a future where Indigenous workforce outcomes are not simply targets, but reflections of genuine equity, cultural recognition, and shared responsibility for a just and self-determined future.



Mark Schultz
Chief People Officer

“By embracing dual knowledges and cultural perspectives, Flinders University has the potential to create transformative educational experiences and drive considerable reconciliation outcomes across its sphere of influence.”

Message from Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

Our Indigenous Workforce Strategy is shaped by the relationships that sustain us through our connections to Country, to community, and to one another.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination sits at the heart of the Indigenous Workforce Strategy and at the heart of our responsibilities as a university. This strategy grows from a place of deep love for our ancestors, people, our cultures, and the lands, sky and waters that hold us. Our sovereignty and self-determination are living truths, carried through generations and expressed in the ways we teach, lead, and care for one another. At Flinders, our responsibility is to honour those truths by creating a workplace where our communities can stand strong in who we are, where our cultural authority is respected, and our wellbeing is held with genuine care.

Indigenous staff, students and communities contribute to the ecosystem of the University toward more inclusive, transformative and sustainable practices grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

Self-determination and sovereignty are not abstract principles; they are lived responsibilities that guide how we work, how we lead, and how we care for our people. This strategy honours those responsibilities by strengthening the environment that allows our staff to bring their identity, their cultural authority, their knowledge, and their aspirations to Flinders University.

Aligned with *Agenda 2035: Impact. With Purpose.*, **we are committed to building a vibrant culture** grounded in an inclusive environment, a shared sense of place, and deep respect for the lands and waters that hold us. **Our values – Integrity, Courage, Innovation, and Excellence** shape how we walk this path together. They remind us that we are Stronger Together, learning from Indigenous knowledge holders whose leadership enriches our university and our impacts.

This strategy strengthens Indigenous governance, nurtures pathways for growth, and embeds cultural safety as a shared responsibility. It reflects our commitment to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with respect, clarity of purpose, and focus on supporting self-determined success at every stage of their employment journey.



Professor Simone Ulalka Tur
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

“This strategy strengthens Indigenous governance, nurtures pathways for growth, and embeds cultural safety as a shared responsibility.”

Message from Senior Elder on Campus (Larrakia)

As Elders on Campus at Flinders University, we welcome the commitment expressed in the Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2026–2030.

We acknowledge this strategy as an important step toward increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across the University and, more importantly, toward creating meaningful and lasting change for our people, our families, and the generations who will follow. This work calls us to walk together with honesty, humility, and respect, grounded in truth, shared responsibility, and genuine partnership.

Our communities carry deep strength, resilience, and knowledge grounded through lived experiences shaped by Country, culture, and collective memory. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring invaluable contributions to this university through our knowledge, our relationships, our leadership, and our care for community. When these contributions are respected and supported, the entire university is enriched.

We strongly support the focus on recruitment and employment pathways that are culturally respectful, accessible, and designed to empower our people. Equally important is retention and career development. Our people should not only be welcomed, but encouraged and supported to grow, to lead, and to succeed in ways that honor who they are. True inclusion is not measured by presence alone, but by whether people feel they belong, are heard, and are able to reach their full potential.

Cultural safety, anti-racism, and inclusive practices must remain at the heart of this strategy. This requires more than words or intentions. It demands ongoing learning, deep listening, courage, and accountability at every level of the institution. Workplaces must be free from racism and discrimination and grounded in genuine respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities, cultures, community connections and Country.

We also affirm the critical importance of **recognising and embedding Indigenous Knowledges**. These knowledges are living and evolving, held in relationship with Country, culture, and community. Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing must be respected, protected, and embedded with care and integrity. They must never be separated from the cultural authority and responsibilities that sustain them.



Uncle Richard Fejo
Senior Elder (Larrakia) and
Senior Elder on-campus (Darwin)

Finally, we emphasise the importance of Indigenous leadership. When our people are empowered to lead, decisions are informed by lived experience, cultural wisdom, and strong community connection. Leadership is not only about positions or titles; it is about voice, influence, and the right to self-determination. Strong Indigenous leadership strengthens the whole institution.

As Elders, we offer our guidance and support as this strategy continues to unfold. We encourage genuine partnership, continuous reflection, and a shared commitment to walking together in a way that honors our past, strengthens our present, and builds a better, more just future for all.

“Reconciliation is the environment we create, it begins and ends with us.”

Reflections

Flinders University continues to strengthen its commitment to meaningful and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, building on the previous Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2022–2025.

At the conclusion of the previous strategy, Indigenous employment reached 2.5% (FTE) which consisted of 62 staff located across six colleges and three portfolios.

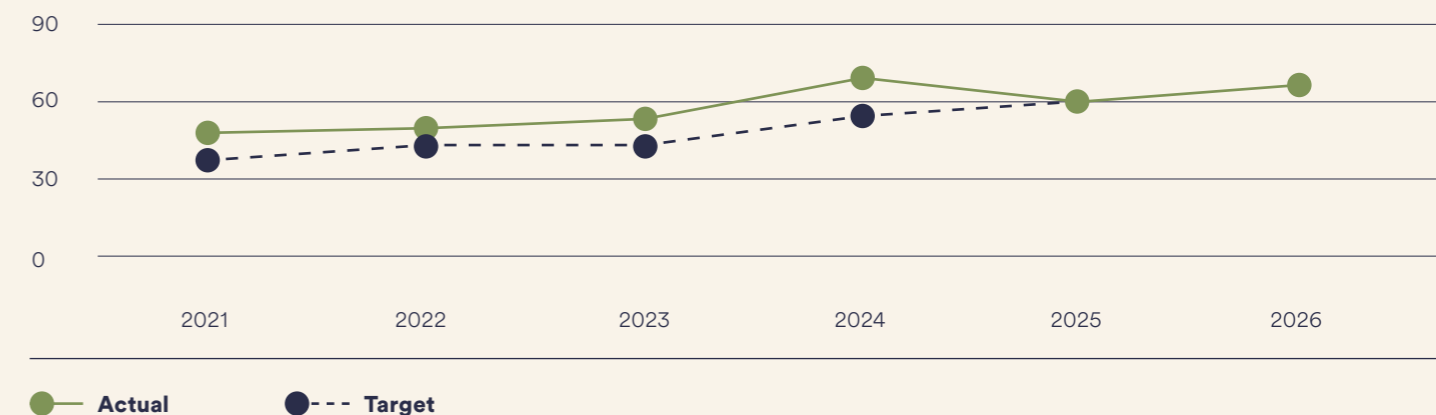
Notably, over this time Indigenous employment fluctuated between 2.3% and 2.8%, and although the 3% employment rate was not achieved during this timeframe, 85% of the deliverables and milestones from other priority areas were achieved and embedded.

Table 1: shows the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Professional, Academic and Total Indigenous employment staff FTE as of 31 March each year. This includes all employment types (Continuing, Fixed Term, and Contingent).

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026*
Total Indigenous FTE	42.3	48.8	56.5	66.3	61.8	65.2
Academic FTE	23.9	27.3	28.8	31.8	32.2	36.0
Professional FTE	18.4	21.4	26.7	34.5	29.5	29.2
Unknown FTE			1.0			
Total University FTE	1,964.6	2,013.2	2,196.0	2,272.3	2,262.9	2,330.3
% Indigenous	2.1%	2.2%	2.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.6%

The charts below show the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) actuals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from 31 March across the years 2021–2026.

Chart 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff FTE 2021 - 2026

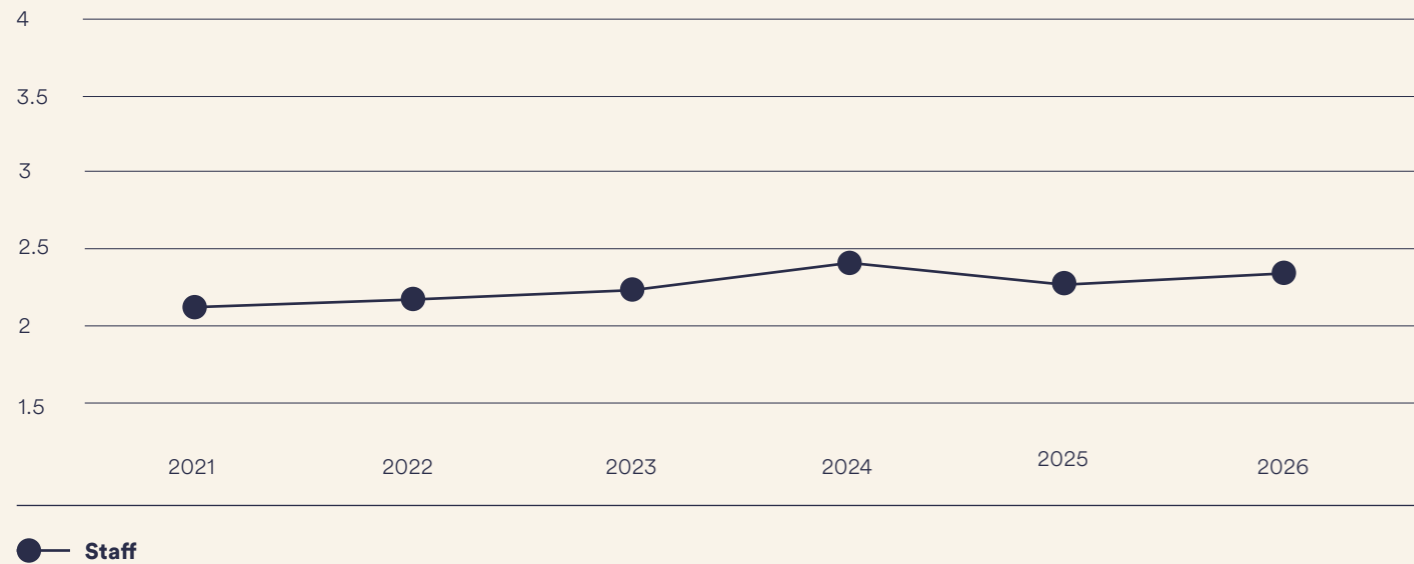


	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Target	37.4	46.4	51.6	56.8	61.9	61.9
Actual	42.3	48.8	56.5	66.3	61.8	65.2

Reflections

The chart below shows the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE) as a percentage from 31 March across the years 2021 - 2026. Flinders University aims to maintain a minimum target of 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and once achieved, will work to sustain this level in line with the University's overall workforce growth.

Chart 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff FTE % 2021 - 2025



	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
% Staff	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.8	2.5	2.6

The University will promote 3% employment as a baseline to be achieved and sustained.

Recent progress has focused on expanding employment pathways, embedding cultural safety, and ensuring Indigenous leadership and knowledges are central to the University's direction.

A major development has been the introduction of targeted positions, operating as special measures under the *Racial Discrimination Act*, which broaden opportunities alongside existing identified roles. Recruitment processes have been refined to reduce barriers and improve visibility for Indigenous applicants, supported by a dedicated Recruitment Working Group and greater use of advertising channels that focus on Indigenous specific audiences.

Planning for this new Indigenous Workforce Strategy has advanced through a comprehensive Indigenous Employee Lifecycle framework, guiding improvements across recruitment, onboarding, development, engagement, and offboarding. New initiatives include a tailored Indigenous Staff Onboarding Program, quarterly newsletters and forums, and planning for both a Strategic Sustainment Working Group and an Indigenous Employee Assistance Program. Cultural Awareness Training remains central to capability building, with more than 1,345 completions in 2025.

The University's Enterprise Agreement reinforces the 3% Indigenous employment target and introduces strengthened provisions such as professional development funding, recognition of cultural load, and preferences for secure employment. Cultural load is now formally acknowledged in the Academic Workload Model, ensuring fair recognition for contributions such as Indigenous curriculum and cultural advisory work.

The First Nations Researchers Collective has strengthened Research staff and HDR students' networks and contributed to more than \$16.7 million in research funding, including over \$10 million in recent NHMRC Investigator Grants awarded to four Indigenous staff. Senior Indigenous academic leadership, including the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), Director of Poche SA+NT, and Research Lead for the Indigenous Research Strategy demonstrates the University's commitment to Indigenous-led direction.

As the next phase of the Indigenous Workforce Strategy begins, the University remains focused on deep respect for Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and leadership, ensuring Flinders is a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can thrive and shape the future.

The First Nations Researchers Collective is a supportive research environment that fosters mentorship and collaboration, and builds the capacity of emerging and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Academics and HDR students.



Yara, Judy Watson 2016

Our Commitment



Vision

To elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout a career journey that values connection and cultural knowledge, builds and maintains trust, and develops and supports opportunities and leadership.

Aspiration

We will strive to be a destination for equitable representation through meaningful participation and influence that is embedded in all areas of work and throughout the employee lifecycle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Commitment to Action

Flinders University is committed to embedding sustained, culturally safe, and self-determined workforce practices that elevate and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all levels at the University. This includes strengthening anti-racism practices as a core component of cultural safety and institutional accountability. This strategy moves beyond project-based initiatives to establish enduring systems and structures that recognise cultural knowledge and community connection as essential to our identity and success. We will ensure leadership accountability through transparent governance, regular reporting, and active engagement with Indigenous staff and communities. Through this strategy, we affirm that cultural safety, equity, and Indigenous leadership are not aspirational goals they are foundational to how we work.

Representation and Workforce Objectives

Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce representation across academic and professional roles remains a key priority for the University. While progress has been made, our Indigenous employment targets have not yet been achieved. Sustaining 3% representation continues to serve as an important benchmark and more needs to be done to embed the depth of representation needed to support genuine equity across our workforce.

To drive meaningful and sustained change, the University is committed to strengthening and elevating our representation goals over time. This includes embedding more ambitious employment targets into workforce planning, increasing transparency through enhanced reporting, and expanding structured development pathways that foster mobility, progression, and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Our Intent

Position the University as a destination employer through culturally safe and inclusive practices embedded across recruitment, development, training, advancement, and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, recognising the value of cultural contributions, lived experience, and community connection. The renewed strategy will shift its focus from filling roles to redesigning systems; from individual support to structural change; from compliance to culture; and from representation to influence and sovereignty.

The whole university approach will be championed by senior leaders with shared commitment, responsibility and accountability across colleges and portfolios. The Indigenous Workforce Strategy will be central to delivering priorities outlined in the University's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

Priority Areas

1. Recruitment and Employment Pathways

Flinders University champions diverse and culturally informed recruitment approaches that recognise Indigenous knowledges, lived experience, and transferrable skillsets, ensuring inclusive and sustainable career opportunities.

Employment opportunities and entry pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be expanded across all levels of the institution. This will be reflected through:

- advertising identified and targeted roles through media channels with focus on Indigenous specific audiences.
- promoting Indigenous employment registers and networks.
- implementing targeted recruitment campaigns.
- acknowledging transferable skills and diverse career experiences, recognised and supported through job design, tailored training and development initiatives.
- promoting academic pathways through Indigenous HDR networks.
- Investigating an investment strategy to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

2. Retention and Career Development

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will be supported through welcoming, inclusive, culturally safe and rewarding workplace and pathways where staff can thrive, positioning Flinders University as a destination employer.

Structured onboarding with culturally responsive induction, dedicated mentoring and coaching programs, and access to professional development funding will form the foundation of a pathway for success.

Development and leadership will be fostered through mentoring, secondments, leadership training, and study support, while promoting peer networks to build community and connection. Fostering Flinders' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and staff connections through annual staff forums is central to valuing knowledges and relationships.

Ongoing and structured workforce planning informs targeted retention strategies and ensure sustained career progression.

3. Cultural Safety and Inclusive Practices

Flinders University remains committed to being a safe and affirming workplace where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can thrive. This will be reflected through anti-racism initiatives and measures, including:

- workplace policy reviews to address systemic racism and discrimination.
- strengthening anti-racism initiatives that support cultural safety and align with the University's response to the Australian Human Rights Commission Racism@Uni report.
- a cultural learning framework, encompassing cultural safety and awareness training for all staff.
- embedded Indigenous cultural protocols and guidelines, reflecting Flinders' diverse footprint.
- staff forums and networks for supported community building and connection.
- promotion of cultural events and observances.
- celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff achievements and contributions.

4. Indigenous Knowledges

Flinders will continue to value the deep cultural connections, lived experiences, and community responsibilities, carried by Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff whose cultural authority enriches our work.

As the University's Indigenous strategies affirm, these knowledges will be embedded in curriculum, research priorities, governance, and decision making. Recognition and valuing of Indigenous Knowledges will be reflected through:

- policy development and decision making.
- promotion of the significance and contribution of Indigenous Knowledges as part of academic promotions.
- recognition of cultural load into Academic Workload Model.
- promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff contributions.
- extending Indigenous knowledge integration.

Our Indigenous workforce journey has shown that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are part of decision making, our systems become stronger, more relational, and guides us toward a future grounded in equity, cultural safety, and self determination.

5. Indigenous Leadership

A commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership development will be demonstrated through the identification of clear pathways and succession planning into senior academic and professional leadership positions across colleges and portfolios.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will be encouraged to participate in the University's professional leadership development programs.

Policy and Practice

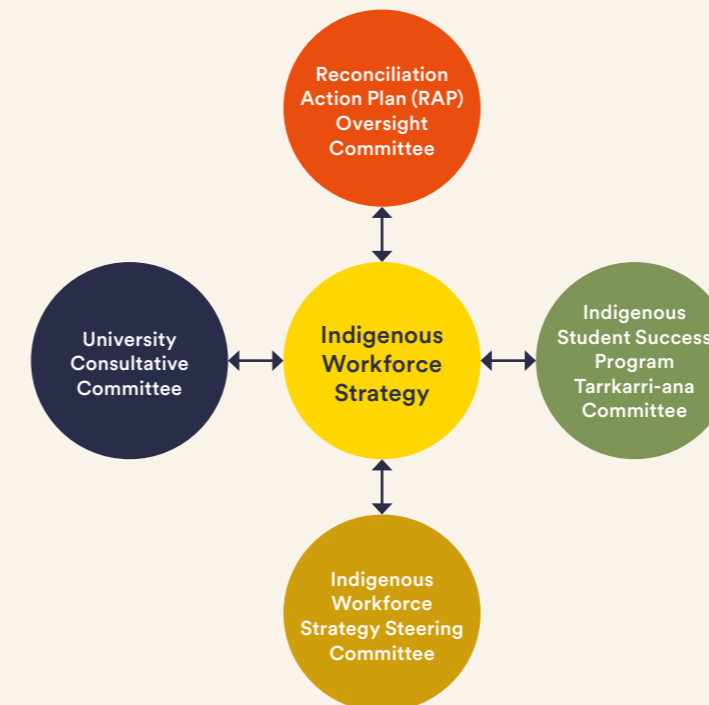
Sustained and Embedded Practices

The Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2026-2030 will move beyond project-based initiatives to establish and embed systemic approaches that build on culturally safe and inclusive practices as core to how we operate.

Implementation of the strategy will be guided by the development of annual IWS Operational Plans that will articulate targeted actions under each priority area, outlining how cultural safety and inclusion are embedded in core workforce practices, how capability and accountability are strengthened, how pathways for mobility, development and leadership are expanded, and how connection is reinforced. This will also enable Flinders to monitor and ensure that actions remain contemporary, measurable, and aligned with the strategy's commitment and intent over the next five years.

Strong governance will underpin the delivery and monitoring of this strategy to ensure that cultural safety, Indigenous workforce priorities and strategic outcomes remain central to university decision-making. Leadership commitment will be demonstrated through active sponsorship and oversight in partnership with Indigenous leaders and advisory groups, with regular reporting of progress through the Indigenous Workforce Strategy Committee and Reconciliation Action Plan Oversight Committee. Governance structures will ensure that cultural safety and Indigenous workforce outcomes are prioritised and tracked consistently.

Governance Structure



Governance and Implementation

The Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2026 – 2030 is supported by a range of internal and external policies, strategies, recommendations, and initiatives. They include:

- Strategic Plan, Agenda 2035. Impact. With Purpose
- Flinders University Enterprise Agreement
- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, May 2025 – May 2029
- Indigenous Student Success Program Funding
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap - Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

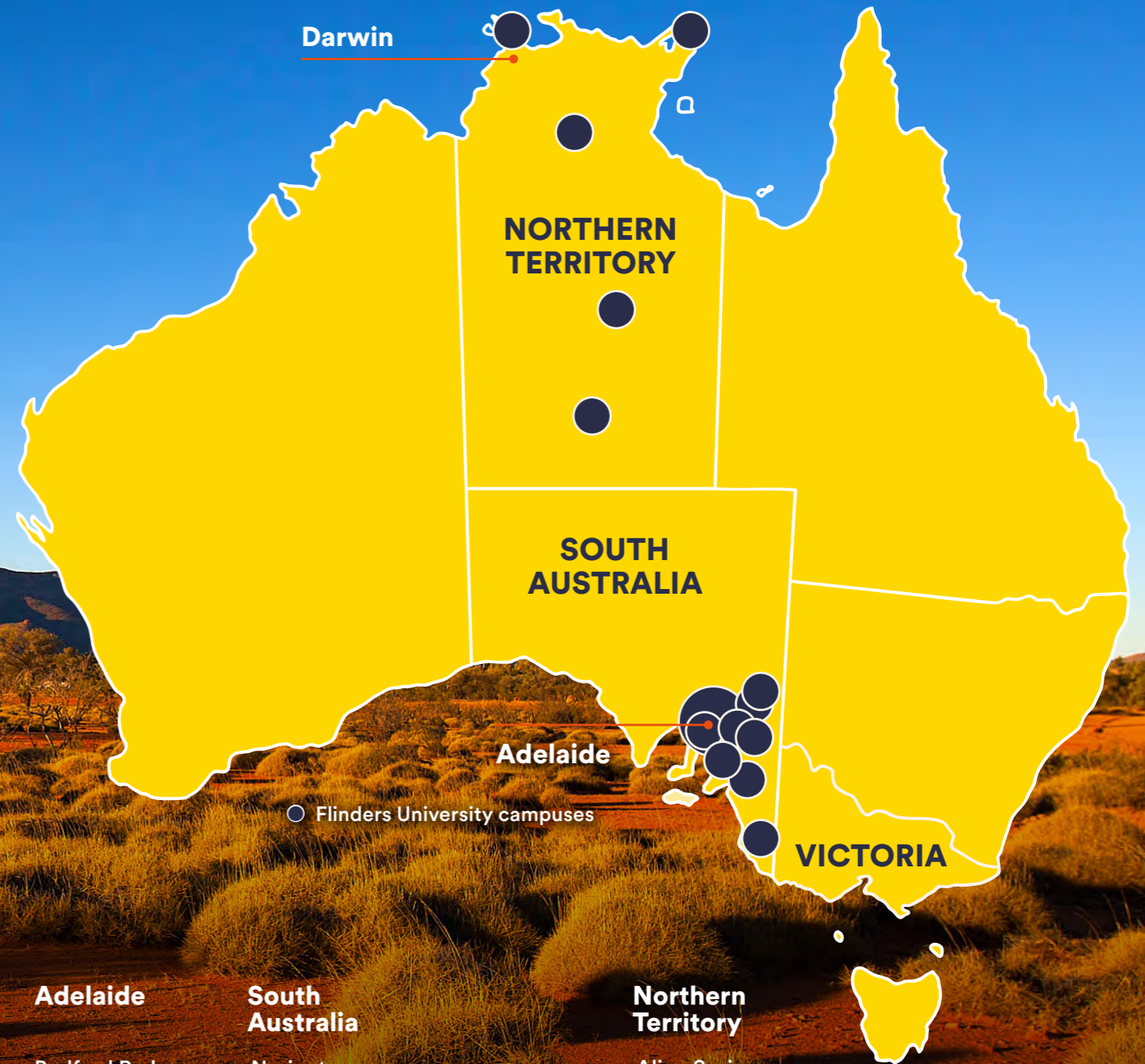
The Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2026 – 2030 (IWS) is overseen by the Chief People Officer, who will:

- Review progress and implementation and report to the University Indigenous Workforce Strategy Committee, University Consultative Committee, RAP Oversight Committee, Tarrkarri-ana Committee, and Senior Executive Team.
- Work with colleges and portfolios to implement and report on actions outlined in the Indigenous Workforce Strategy Annual Operational Plan.

Workforce practices will be refined and evolved through ongoing engagement mechanisms that include regular consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, communities, and collectives. Monitoring of the strategy's impact will be achieved through quantitative metrics and qualitative insights such as storytelling, capturing lived experiences and celebrating success, to inform continuous improvement for the strategy to remain responsive, relevant, and aligned with embedded practices.

Success will be achieved through shared responsibility and meaningful partnerships with the University's colleges and portfolios and with external communities and organisations.

Geographic Footprint



Flinders continues to progress towards its target of 3% Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

At the close of the previous Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2022–2025 (31 March reportable date) Flinders recorded 2.54% Indigenous FTE (59 staff), with historical fluctuation between 2.2% - 2.8% over the four years. The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are employed at Bedford Park in South Australia and in Darwin Northern Territory.

Adelaide

Bedford Park
Kaurna country

Tonsley
Kaurna country

City
Kaurna country

South Australia

Nuriootpa
Ngadjuri country

Berri
Country of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region

Mount Gambier
Boandik country

Murray Bridge
Ngarrindjeri country

Renmark
Country of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region

Victor Harbor
Ngarrindjeri and Ramindjeri country

Northern Territory

Alice Springs
Arrernte country


Darwin
Larrakia country


Katherine
Dagoman, Wardaman, and Jawoyn country

Nhulunbuy
Yolngu country

Tennant Creek
Warumungu country

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