

**DIVERSITY AND  
INCLUSION  
ACTION PLANS  
2018 - 2021**

REPORT



## CONTENTS

CONTENTS PAGE .....	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
PART 1 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AT MONASH.....	4
Diversity & Inclusion Framework .....	4
Diversity & Inclusion Action Plans .....	5
PART 2 KEY ACHIEVEMENT 2018 - 2021.....	6
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff and Students.....	6
Staff and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds .....	7
Staff and students of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities .....	8
Staff and students with disability, ongoing medical or mental health condition.....	9
Gender equality and gender equity.....	10
Students from low socio-economic backgrounds .....	11
PART 3 WHERE TO FROM HERE.....	12

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to summarise the actions taken by Monash University between 2018 – 2021. This work is guided by the University's strategic plan and the [Monash University Ethics Statement](#), seeking to further a community which is diverse, inclusive, innovative and sustainable. This is reflected in the Diversity & Inclusion Framework, which was accompanied by six action plans to ensure: strategic implementation of objectives, measurement of impact and achievements, and the delivery of outcomes consistent with our strategic plan.

The report summarises the University's key achievements across the six action plans:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff and Students,
- Staff and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- Staff and students of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities,
- Staff and students with disability, ongoing medical or mental health condition,
- Gender equality and gender equity, and
- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The report concludes by reflecting on the progress made across 2018 – 2021, while also summarising the critical lessons learnt. Critical reflection to date reveals the next iteration of the University's diversity and inclusion approach needs to promote stronger partnerships across the University, provide greater consideration of intersectionality, and develop approaches for streamlining data collection, analysis and reporting.

## PART 1 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AT MONASH

Monash University proudly acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which Australian campuses stand and recognise their continuing connection to the land and community. We aim to foster an environment which respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and knowledge, and work towards addressing the legacies of the past.

Diversity and Inclusion at Monash University is underpinned by the University's strategic plan, and the [Monash University Ethics Statement](#). Being guided by the vision articulated in these documents, we are working towards a community that is diverse, inclusive, innovative and sustainable, and is upheld in value and in practice by every Monash staff member and student. These pillars have formed the basis of our 2018 – 2021 Framework for Diversity & Inclusion at Monash.

### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

#### We recognise diversity

- We are committed to social justice and human rights.
- We respect and value the diversity of our staff and students – who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, of all genders, who are of diverse gender identities, sexes and sexualities, who have a disability, ongoing medical or mental health condition and who are socially or economically disadvantaged.
- We foster safe communities that celebrate diversity, uniqueness, respect for difference and value the contributions of our staff, students and other stakeholders.

#### We work inclusively

- We celebrate and appreciate our staff and student community by providing opportunities to acknowledge the diverse experiences and contributions made by our whole community through training, workshops, networks and awards.
- We provide inclusive access across the student life-cycle through scholarships, mentoring, pathways, career support and schemes to encourage participation from prospective and current students and alumni so that social, economic, geographical or cultural barriers are not a disadvantage to accessing a Monash education.
- We promote an inclusive workplace culture where diversity is valued and viewed as a key to innovation and excellence. We support staff across the entire employee life-cycle to facilitate their development.
- We seek to provide a culturally safe environment where our Indigenous communities and students and staff of all cultural backgrounds are respected and included.
- We foster accessible and flexible work and study environments for staff and students.
- We create and review our curricula and pedagogical practices to ensure they are inclusive, respectful and culturally sensitive.
- We seek to ensure our employment practices and pathways for progression support staff from non-traditional backgrounds
- We adjust our staff performance measures to recognise achievement relative to opportunity.

#### We innovate

- We measure, assess and strive to improve our efforts to provide a diverse and inclusive environment for our staff and students and communicate these efforts throughout the community.
- We demonstrate our commitment and excellence through external accreditation and acknowledgment of our Diversity and Inclusion achievements.
- We embrace new ideas or initiatives that foster diversity, inclusion and respect.

#### We are sustainable

- We strive to create a University that can evolve, maintain and reflect on our goals, vision and principles.
- We capture and embrace the diversity of our whole community while maintaining the integrity of the international relationships we hold.

- We foster meaningful participation of our diverse student voice within policy and decision-making structures.
- We encourage staff to become champions for Diversity and Inclusion by providing training, time and allocating resources for them to do so.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ACTION PLANS

Our multi-year action plans for 2018 - 2021 align with the Diversity and Inclusion Framework and strategically implement our objectives, measure our impact and achievements and deliver outcomes consistent with our strategic plan. Each action plan focuses on a priority area to ensure we are supporting all staff and students to feel safe and included at work and study. The six priority areas are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff and Students,
- Staff and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- Staff and students of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities,
- Staff and students with disability, ongoing medical or mental health condition,
- Gender equality and gender equity, and
- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Each Action Plan was formed around four focus areas:

- Leadership and governance,
- Access and participation,
- Culture and success, and
- Innovation and collaboration.

## PART 2 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2018 - 2021

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS AND STAFF

Monash University aspires to be a national leader in Indigenous Australian advancement for staff, students and communities by creating an inclusive, respectful and welcoming environment that embeds Indigenous knowledges, worldviews and voices. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan builds on our existing work and reflects the initial phase of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019-2030.

2021 saw the second full year of Monash's implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019-2030. While the disruptions of COVID-19 lockdowns and financial impacts of closed international borders impacted some elements of the Framework, significant advances were achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students. The William Cooper Institute's reach within the university and further afield continues to gain momentum.

A number of key initiatives have been established to enhance the recruitment, retention and success of Indigenous students. The Indigenous Student Admissions Committee (ISAC) oversees the making of coursework offers to Indigenous students through VTAC and is finalising new processes for students considering postgraduate coursework and other non-VTAC applicants as well. Detailed learning analytics are being used by the William Cooper Institute to identify students at risk and to target the resources of the Institute and the broader university to support these students. The establishment of a new tutor matching platform has resulted in increased engagement from both students and tutors. Indigenous student support has also been aligned with institutional systems through UniCRM to streamline student case management.

In collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Monash College, the Monash Indigenous Access Program (MIAP) has a course review scheduled for late 2021, with recommendations to be endorsed and implemented in 2022. The Master of Indigenous Business Leadership was successfully launched in May 2021, as a joint program between the William Cooper Institute and Monash Business School. The first cohort of students will complete the first three core units by the end of the year. A pilot Indigenous Student Support Service Agreement between the Law Faculty and William Cooper Institute has been jointly developed, and will be expanded across faculties in 2022.

A new higher degree by research process is under development to support the Indigenous Research Action Plan. This will scaffold the Indigenous student journey from application to completion and also include pathways to potential employment at Monash. A number of exciting research opportunities have been developed in partnership with the William Cooper Institute including development work on a cross-disciplinary Indigenous Water Centre, collaborating on the Nourish to Flourish program, a project investigating decolonising curriculum and processes within the Education faculty and a cross-institutional research project investigating factors for Indigenous student success.

To ensure that all Monash students are equipped with an introductory understanding of Indigenous knowledges, cultures and contemporary issues, Indigenous Australian Voices has been added to the compulsory module suite from 2022. This program introduces students to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia, and fulfils the University's commitment to equip all students with an opportunity to understand the rich and complex histories of the lands on which we study, work and live.

These student modules will also form the basis of a new online staff training module for release in early 2022. Further face-to-face staff training is also being developed to supplement the online modules. The new Indigenous Employment Policy and Procedure have been finalised to frame all Indigenous staff recruitment, retention and advancement at Monash.

## STAFF AND STUDENTS FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Monash has a diverse student body and staff profile drawn from different backgrounds, religions, cultures and countries. We use English as our shared language of learning, teaching, research and administration, but we draw strength from our diverse staff and student populations. We understand that our different perspectives make us innovative and progressive, and celebrate the differences that make us special.

The COVID-19 pandemic, consequent repeated and extended lockdowns and large numbers of students based off-shore in 2020 and 2021 resulted in the university implementing, strengthening and expanding upon its online and hybrid delivery modes of many of its services and programs. Counselling Services and University Health Services (UHS) recruited new staff from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and created new positions for Mandarin fluent speaking social workers with mental health training to provide telehealth counselling to international students unable to travel to Australia. The percentage of counselling clients who were international students rose from 36% in 2018 to 41% in 2020. Disability support provided by Disability Support Services (DSS) for international students rose from 13% in 2017 to close to 20% in 2021. Well over 50% of DSS casual student support workers are either international students or from a CALD background.

Monash Thrive delivered its first survey regarding mental health to international students in April 2020 with 8 more surveys run to date for all Monash students enrolled in Australia and Malaysia. Informed by the results of these surveys, in partnership with Allianz and stakeholders including MUISS and MSA Welfare, a range of initiatives were developed to monitor and improve the mental health outcomes for international students.

English Connect and Student Academic Success deliver high quality, innovative core English Language programs that align with the current experience of international students and build their confidence, improve their academic English and support interaction with domestic students. Despite the pandemic lockdowns and travel restrictions, annual program participation rates were maintained at over 5,000 students. English Connect also delivered programs in Suzhou and Shanghai, China.

Programs and initiatives specifically designed to increase inclusiveness for staff and students from CALD backgrounds included:

- The development and implementation of a range of culturally appropriate health messages,
- An educational program for students on anti-racism,
- Individualised case management for international students, asylum seekers and students from refugee backgrounds,
- Programs to increase engagement between local and international students including AMigo and Global Ambassadors Program, and
- The securement of funding and ongoing development of educational materials for international students regarding respectful relationships and sexual health.

## STAFF AND STUDENTS OF DIVERSE GENDERS, SEXES AND SEXUALITIES

Monash University aspires to be national leader in maintaining a best-practice approach to inclusion of students and staff of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities through leadership support, engagement with the broader community and visibility of our practices, programs and initiatives. We recognise that when students feel safe and included in their study environment they have better outcomes in participation, wellbeing and success. We also recognise that an inclusive environment where staff can bring their whole selves to work facilitates a sense of belonging that leads to increased engagement, wellbeing and career satisfaction, and improved staff retention and productivity.

The University has continued its strong commitment to inclusion of staff and students of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities as reflected in updated procedures, support and promotion of key community events, and the University community's strong engagement with LGBTIQ networks and training. The Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexuality (DGSS) Advisory Group provides significant leadership in many university initiatives designed to create an LGBTIQ inclusive campus.

The Monash Ally Network, set up to support students and to provide a visible presence of staff allyship, was expanded in 2020 so that students can now also become allies. Since its inception, 1186 staff across the university have been trained as allies and joined the Ally Network. Monash appointed its inaugural Executive Sponsor of LGBTIQ Inclusion, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Education) in 2018, and delivered Ally training to members of the Senior Management Team the same year. Additional training that has been developed includes the Queer 101 online program for students.

Changes have been made in university-wide policy and processes, including DGSS's development of a set of guidelines for capturing gender data inclusively, which have been adopted by Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) to help guide researchers on ethical ways to ask questions about gender. Monash University lowered the fees for testamur replacement in the case of name change as part of a gender affirmation process in 2019. All-Gender toilets have been introduced across campuses with more than 17 locations now in operation. Changes to student data collection systems such as Callista and Moodle are in progress, ensuring pronouns are captured more inclusively, and that they allow for the inclusion of preferred names.

The University's HR policies and procedures were reviewed to ensure they are inclusive of staff of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities and their families. In 2018 a Gender Affirmation / Transition in the Workplace Procedure was developed for staff wishing to formally affirm their gender at Monash University and accompanied by guidelines with additional information for staff and supervisors. Staff training has been updated, with the Equal Opportunity mandatory online module reviewed to incorporate an example featuring a transgender staff member.

Monash University has supported and promoted several key community events including Pride March, IDAHOBIT, and Wear It Purple Day. Almost 200 staff and students attended the 2020 Pride March prior to lockdowns. Celebrations of these days of significance have continued online where restrictions have prevented in-person gathering. Other events have also been implemented, including biannual Inclusive Swim and Gym Nights in 2019, now called Monash Sport Pride Nights, to encourage healthy active lifestyles across the whole LGBTIQ Monash community. There has been a growth in collaborative LGBTIQ research initiatives such as the XYX Lab and Queering Accounting initiatives.

Monash is a proud member of Pride in Diversity, Australia's first and only national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTIQ inclusion. The University was awarded a Silver Employer Status from the Australian Workplace Equality Index between 2018-2020.



## STAFF AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY, ONGOING MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

Monash University aspires to be a national leader in empowering staff and students with disability, ongoing medical or mental health condition by providing a safe, accessible and fair environment. We are investing in services that support these staff and students to have a full and enriching experience at Monash, and to be able to take up opportunities and thrive irrespective of their different abilities.

Monash University has continued its strong commitment to supporting the inclusion of staff and students with disability, ongoing medical or mental health condition. Strong collaborative partnerships have been key to the successful delivery of services and implementation of new initiatives to promote inclusion.

The Monash University Counselling Service (UCS) is a highly professional mental health service which provides individual consultations and mental health literacy programs. The focus in recent years has been to reduce barriers to access. The most significant barrier to access remains timely availability of appointments. Since 2018, there has been a 20% year on year increase in consultations with the exception of 2020. The adoption of Telehealth in response to COVID-19 restrictions was unplanned, but has proven to significantly improve access to counselling services by enabling students to have consultations regardless of their location. Telehealth will remain a mainstay of service delivery into the future.

Monash's commitment to Mental Health and wellbeing for students and staff is outlined in the Mental Health Policy, revised in 2020. Since 2019, Monash Thrive has conducted a large scale, longitudinal digital mental health survey to students and staff, which has been analysed to provide a deep insight into student and staff concerns and mental wellbeing. Findings have informed the design of the Monash Thrive for International Students website and future critical interventions. Since 2017 numbers of students registered with Disability Support Services have grown by 50%, to currently just under 3,000 registered students. The launch and delivery of GradWISE program, offering individual career coaching and support has seen 74% of graduates with disability participating in the program gaining employment in line with their studies.

As a result of the impacts of COVID-19, the majority of DSS support transitioned to online learning. There has been a significant increase in students requiring note taking support (16%) and live captioning support (650%) as well as closed captioning support (150%).

## GENDER EQUALITY & GENDER EQUITY

Monash University is working to ensure we are a destination of choice for staff and students irrespective of their gender, by creating a fair and equitable workplace and study environment. Staff diversity is a key to excellence and innovation and we celebrate the strength that difference creates. Over the years we have implemented innovative policies and programs to promote equal opportunity and to increase the participation of women in senior roles.

Monash's commitment to gender equality and gender equity is delivered through promoting equal opportunity, implementing a wide range of gender equity initiatives, removing barriers to women's participation in senior roles and actively working to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual violence and gender-based violence.

Monash's ambition to achieve gender equality in the workplace is guided by the Workplace Gender Equity Strategy 2019-2022. The participation of women in senior roles reached 39.8% in 2021 while staff in senior professional roles achieved gender parity. Women's representation on the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee (VCEC) grew exponentially from 28.6% to 41.7% over the past 6 years (up by 13.1%) and membership on Monash Council exceeded gender parity. The proportion of women among associate professors in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) saw highly accelerated improvements over the past five years, reaching 42.9% in 2021. The most significant gender gap continues to persist among professors where women represent 28.8%. Among professors born in non-English speaking countries, the representation of women is even lower at 18%.

The University's focus on supporting the attraction, retention and advancement of academic women in STEMM further intensified through the implementation of Athena SWAN Action Plan 2018-2021. Initiatives to address unconscious bias were implemented, as well as initiatives designed to build inclusive leadership, championing diversity through the Panel Pledge campaign, and establishing the STEMM Women Academic Network. Monash was one of the first universities to host sessions dedicated to Achievements Relative to Opportunity, which included addressing career impacting circumstances specific to the pandemic. In the 2020/2021 academic promotion round, 78% of women and 65% of men utilised "Relevant Circumstances" and the promotion success of women exceeded that of their colleagues.

The University's proactive steps to support staff with caregiving responsibilities included parental transition workshops and coaching sessions, an audit of parenting rooms and promotion of relevant policies including workplace flexibility. Between 2019 and 2020, the uptake of carer's leave tripled. 84.2% of staff who are parents/carers reported to have the flexibility they need to manage work and other commitments (2021 Staff Equity and Diversity Survey). The University's organisation-wide gender pay gap remained below the national average at 12.2% and the University endorsed an ambitious pay equity target to halve the organisation-wide gender pay gap by 2022.

Monash implements a whole-of-institution approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence and gender-based violence. In 2018 the Respectful Communities unit was established to focus on primary prevention including building gender equity and gender equality understanding within the student community. Respectful Communities continues to widely promote support services and reporting pathways for students and staff across all training programs, encouraging our community to report incidents of discrimination and harassment if they occur (including if they are witnessed by a third party). In 2020 a new Respect. Now. Always (RNA) Support App designed by students, for students was launched - the Monash University bSafe App. Almost 1000 students downloaded the app within the first five months of its release.

Educating our community on the prevalence and the gendered nature of sexual violence has been of critical focus, with more than 2,750 staff and student leaders completing training on responding to disclosures of sexual violence since 2018. Since 2018 more than 2,600 student leaders have completed in-person training on the prevention of gender-based violence. Monash was one of the first universities in Australia to introduce a mandatory module for new students on respectful relationships, consent and support services. The module sets a standard of behaviour for students at Monash, making clear our expectations of respect, equality and inclusion for all. As of September 2021, more than 85,000 Monash students have completed the Respect at Monash module.

## STUDENTS FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

Monash University aspires to be recognised as a national leader in increasing the social mobility of students from low SES communities. We strongly believe in supporting educationally disadvantaged students to access university, have a fulfilling experience and graduate ready to start their careers and make significant contributions to the wider community.

Monash provided programs and support to students from low-socio economic backgrounds at every stage of their journey, with outreach and mentoring for secondary students, scholarships and academic co-curricular programs for current Monash students, and strengthened graduate outcomes through alumni mentoring and leadership opportunities. Monash continued to deliver proven and effective programs specifically designed to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds including Access Monash Mentoring; Schools Access Monash; Strengthening Engagement and Achievement in Mathematics and Science (SEAMS), TeamWork and Betty Amsden AO Alumni Mentoring Program. While the content of programs needed to be modified due to the switch to online engagement, all programs were successfully delivered virtually during restrictions as a result of COVID-19. The delivery of programs is possible due to collaborative partnerships with partner secondary schools, Go8 universities and the Warwick Alliance.

Barriers to participation and success for students from low-socio economic backgrounds are addressed using a whole of university approach. Protective factors such as developing a sense of belonging, access to 'hot' networks, and navigating academic expectations are developed through Peer Mentoring and Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS). After being piloted in 2019 with select faculties, in 2020 all first-year undergraduate students were matched with a mentor- an experienced senior student from their faculty. To date, 22,860 students have been enrolled in Peer Mentoring as mentees and mentors. Students' transition to the workforce was supported by implementation of Alumni to Student Mentoring, launched in 2020. In 2020, 43% of participating students were from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Participation rates for students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds has increased for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. There remains work to be done on a faculty level, with only 4 of the 22 course clusters managing to approach the targets set and few consistent increases year on year. The increase in participation rates has been supported by implementation of a scholarship review, with a focus on increasing the level of financial support to students from under-represented communities. Equity scholarships valued at over \$43.57 million have been awarded in the period of 2018-2021, with all domestic undergraduate students demonstrating financial disadvantage guaranteed a scholarship. Monash has greatly improved its recruitment of talented students from low-socio-economic backgrounds, supported by equity entry programs, including the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) and Monash Guarantee. The number of SEAS applications increased dramatically in 2021, due to the introduction of new difficult circumstances subcategories (bushfires and COVID-19). This saw the proportion of offers made to students based on SEAS increase in 2021. Additionally, the proportion of offers made to Monash Guarantee eligible students continued to increase each year.

## PART 3 WHERE TO FROM HERE

A wealth of activity and progress has been made at Monash University between 2018 – 2021 in furthering our safe and vibrant campus community, to be one that is diverse, inclusive, innovative and sustainable. Much of this work occurred across the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which placed unprecedented strain on the global community and various sectors, including higher education, since 2020. We are proud of what our community has continued to achieve in terms of diversity and inclusion despite these challenges, and remain committed to this work into the future.

[\*Impact 2030\*](#) identifies inclusion as a strategic goal for the University, committing to developing communities where our students and staff can build meaningful connections within and beyond the University, and find a sense of belonging in the University. Inclusiveness will be assessed through student and staff sense of belonging in the University; and thought leadership and public debate. The new iteration of the University's Diversity & Inclusion Framework and Action Plan will need to recognise contemporary challenges and seek to further our inclusion goal.

To do this, we need to reflect on our successes across our 2018 – 2021 action plans, but also critically review where we need to adapt and evolve to ensure the diverse needs of our community are being met and to ensure we are utilising our resources and skillsets effectively and efficiently. While there was clear success with the 2018-2021 action plans, it has been recognised that each of the six frameworks activate reporting processes may or may not take a systematically intersectional approach. This means that key aspects of supporting a genuinely diverse and inclusive approach are being missed. Moreover, they are generating a series of dispersed data collection processes that increase the likelihood of inconsistency in reporting on similar matters, generate additional unnecessary reporting activity, and make it more difficult to identify the 'sources of truth' on a given matter.

Research and collaborative consultation with stakeholders across the University to date has confirmed the desire for an intersectional approach, streamlined data collection, analysis and reporting, and stronger partnership across the University to further goals of equity, diversity and inclusion. Later in 2022, we look forward to sharing our new multi-year Framework and action plan for a diverse and inclusive Monash.



**MONASH**  
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