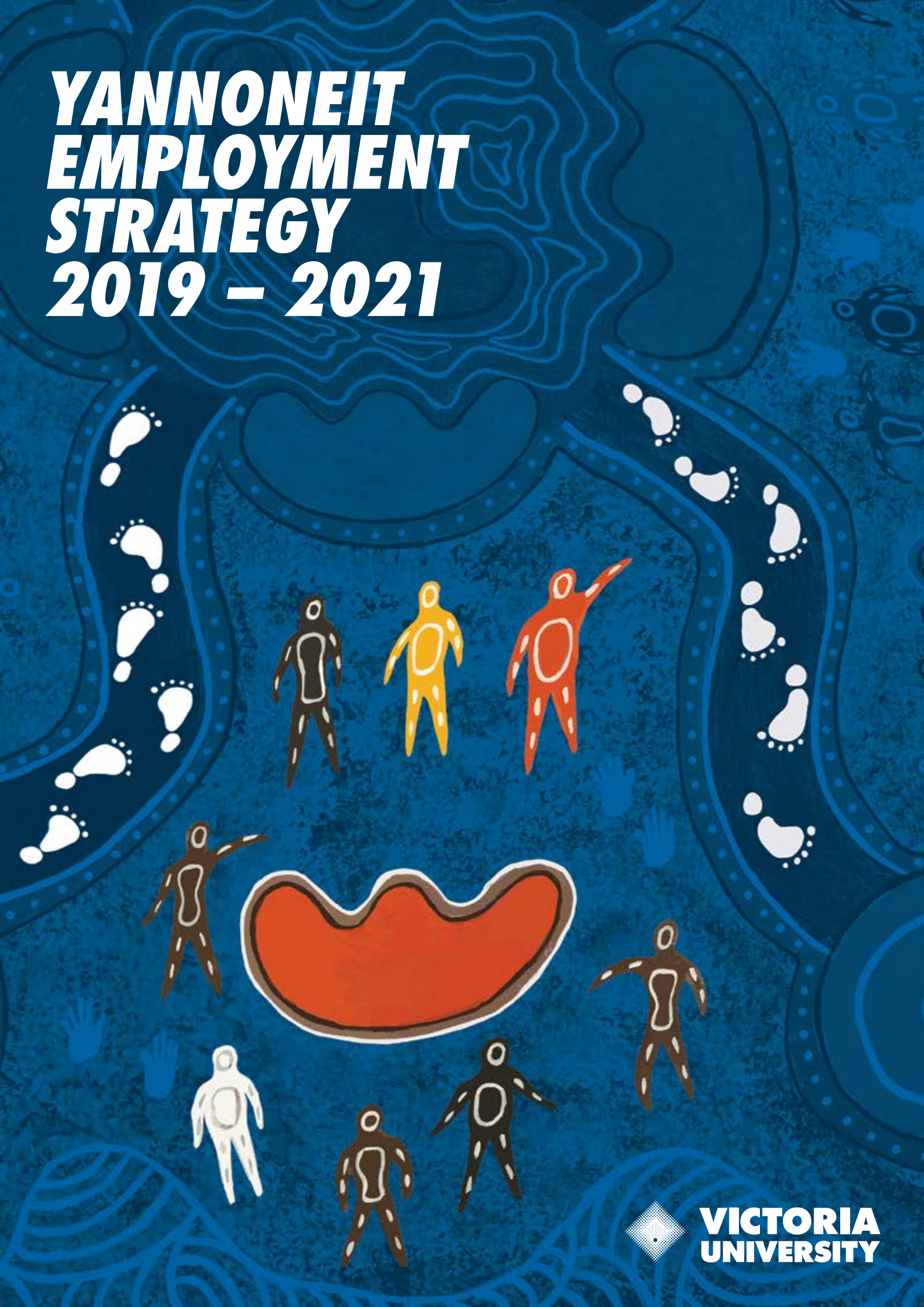


# **YANNONEIT EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY 2019 – 2021**



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Victoria University (VU) acknowledges the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) and Wathaurung (Waddawurrung) on our Melbourne Campuses, and the Gadigal and Guring-gai people of the Eora Nation on our Sydney campus. These groups are the custodians of University land and have been for many centuries.

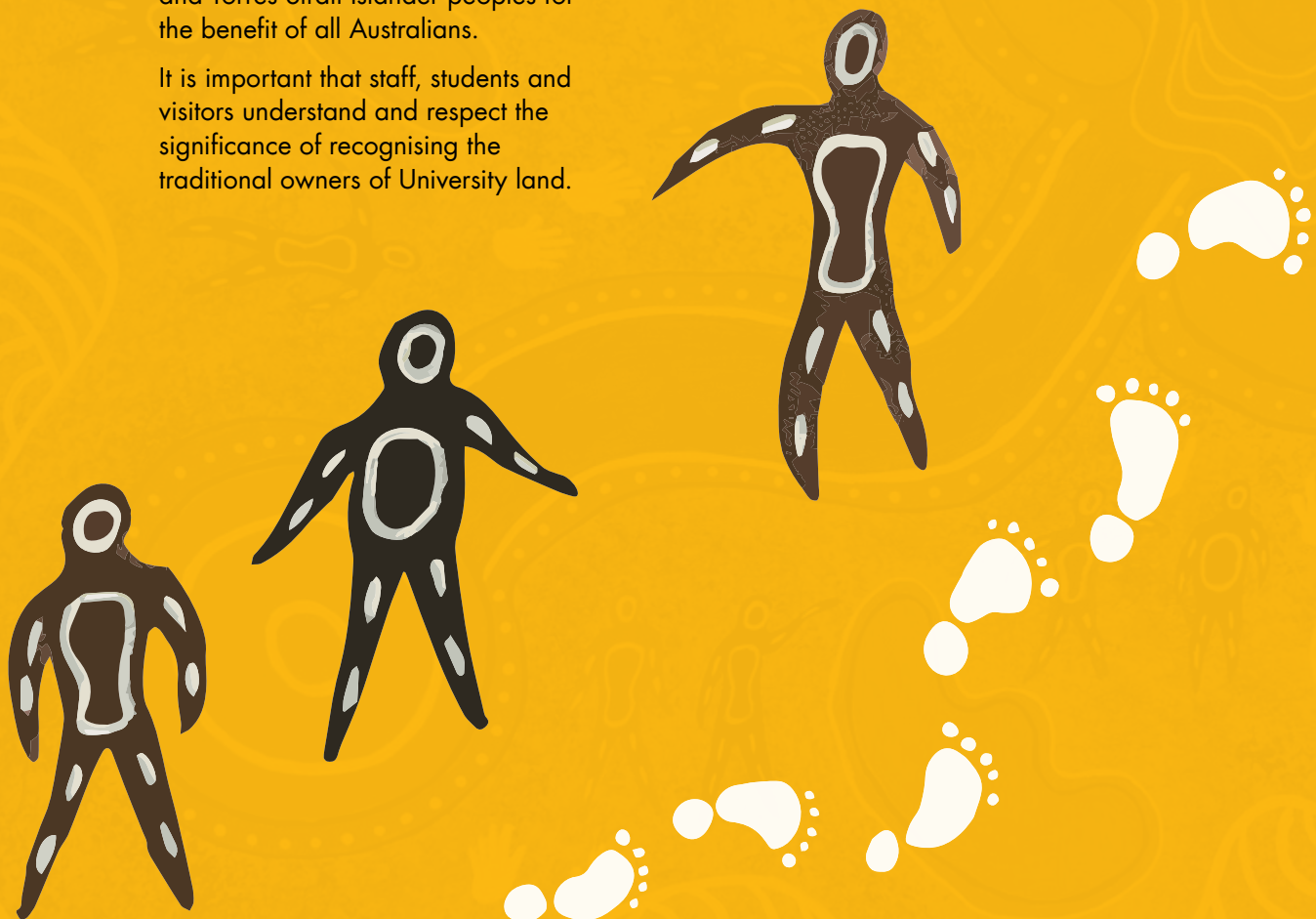
We acknowledge that the land on which our campuses stand are places of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. The Kulin and Eora people's living culture had, and has, a unique role in the life of these regions. VU supports the aim of Reconciliation Australia to build better relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the benefit of all Australians.

It is important that staff, students and visitors understand and respect the significance of recognising the traditional owners of University land.

## ABOUT THE NAME

To honour the Wurundjeri and support the continuation of the Woiwurrung language, the name 'Yannoneit' meaning 'to walk' or 'come walk' was chosen for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

In our usage of Yannoneit we are symbolically inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to walk with us on our path to becoming: open and excellent, creating exceptional value for any student from any background and uplifting the communities in which we operate (Victoria University Strategic Plan 2016-2020).



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# VICE-CHANCELLOR'S FOREWORD

Victoria University is committed to supporting people from diverse backgrounds to thrive and succeed at the University as staff and students. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is integral to our vision and mission as a University.

The Victoria University Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy 2017 – 2020 (Shine Bright) provides a framework for a university-wide and community approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation – particularly in the West of Melbourne. The Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy encompasses all aspects of University activity.

This Yannoneit Employment Strategy 2019 – 2021 supports the work of the Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy and outlines the ways we can gamadji (grow), dambunmon (share) and jerrboongun (connect) our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and culture through employment. As a leading employer in the West our aspiration is to be a University where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can work and flourish in community with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and with all our staff.

Moondani Balluk is established as a centre of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, teaching and support. Building on the work and reputation of this centre, we are well-placed to reach our aspiration to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and become known as a welcoming and supportive employer.

Like others in the higher education sector, and in line with Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017 – 2020, we have set ambitious targets to increase employment. We recognise that following education, participation through employment is key to positive outcomes in many other aspects of life.

As well as an aspiration to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed at the University the goals of this strategy are to increase and enhance cultural engagement across the University and foster an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can develop and thrive, as is our aspiration for all staff at the University.

We recognise there are challenges in this work and it will take time to achieve our goals however, I am sure that through the collaborative efforts of the many who share this aspiration we will make good progress.



# VICTORIA UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT

Victoria University is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' opportunity and success and to the improvement of Aboriginal\* Australians employment and education outcomes. This commitment includes Aboriginal staff and students at the University and the wider Aboriginal community in the West and North of Melbourne.

VU wants to be renowned as open, culturally supportive and inclusive of Aboriginal staff, students and community. The University also seeks to work in partnership with Aboriginal leaders to advance the social and economic, wellbeing and health of Aboriginal people.

In acknowledging the importance of place to Aboriginal people, the University also seeks to ensure its physical campuses and working environments are welcoming and inspirational to the Aboriginal communities we serve and will provide symbols that acknowledge and represent Aboriginal people.

An Acknowledgement of Country will be conducted by the University at public meetings and first yearly meetings of Council, Academic Board and all its sub-committees. The formal words of Acknowledgement will be used on these occasions.

\*Hereafter in this document, the term 'Aboriginal' also refers to Torres Strait Islander people



# INTRODUCTION

Victoria University recognises that increasing Aboriginal employment is a key aspect of overcoming Aboriginal disadvantage. Improved employment outcomes are one of the goals of the federal government's Closing the Gap Strategy. <http://closingthegap.pmc.gov.au/>

The 2018 Report on the Closing the Gap strategy notes that 'the power of a job can be transformational through the provision of not only greater financial independence but also skills and training that open up future opportunities'.

For this reason, Victoria University is committed to providing employment, educational and development opportunities for Aboriginal people and supports the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017 – 2020 key aim of increasing numbers of Aboriginal people participating in tertiary education as students, as graduates and as academic, research and professional staff.



# YANNONEIT EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The Yannoneit Employment Strategy (YES) outlines goals and actions for Aboriginal staff at VU. The goals of the YES are:

- To increase the number of Aboriginal employees in the VU workforce
- To provide development opportunities for Aboriginal people across all roles and in particular development opportunities for Aboriginal academic staff
- To establish and promote VU as a culturally sensitive and supportive workplace for Aboriginal people

The strategy will achieve its goals through focussing on five areas:

- 1 Recruitment
- 2 Induction
- 3 Retention and wellbeing
- 4 Professional development
- 5 Promotion and community engagement

The delivery of the goals and targets in the YES will complement activities in other areas of the University that focus on increasing Aboriginal student representation, participation, support and success; research and curriculum development and broader University engagement with communities and partnerships as outlined in the Bathelmun Yalingwa strategy.



# 1. RECRUITMENT

Achieving a target of 3% of VU's total workforce is an aspiration of Victoria University's Bathelmun Yalingwa strategy and a national goal of the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy. Achieving this target will involve a University-wide effort. It can only be achieved through addressing the challenge across the employment lifecycle from recruitment to selection, to retention and development and workforce planning. Enhanced cultural awareness and understanding of the context and history of Aboriginal disadvantage by all staff, and by hiring managers in particular, is an integral element of this effort.

The target will only be achieved incrementally and through longer-term strategies that include, in particular:

- building an academic workforce
- strengthening the number of Aboriginal students completing degrees
- building skills and capacity in the Aboriginal community for professional employment

Efforts to increase the Aboriginal workforce have to be recognised as interdependent with VUs Research and Research Training Strategy and Aboriginal Research and Research Training Strategies of other Australian Universities. It is through these strategies that overall Aboriginal academic and research capacity will be increased, leading to higher employment of Aboriginal academic and research staff. A strong cohort of Aboriginal HDR students at VU will also enable the University (and other Australian Universities) to realise their aspirations to improve the Aboriginal academic employment rate.

A second strand of achieving a 3% target is through increasing the numbers of professional staff at the University. This will require a concerted, targeted, supported, longer-term effort to build capacity to enable current and future Aboriginal staff to progress through to higher levels at the University. Specific strategies may include a focus on providing employment

opportunities for Aboriginal PhD students and under-graduate students during and after completion of their studies; providing employment pathways to entry level jobs through collaboration with VU Polytechnic and when an Aboriginal staff member progresses to a higher level another Aboriginal person is appointed to their former role.

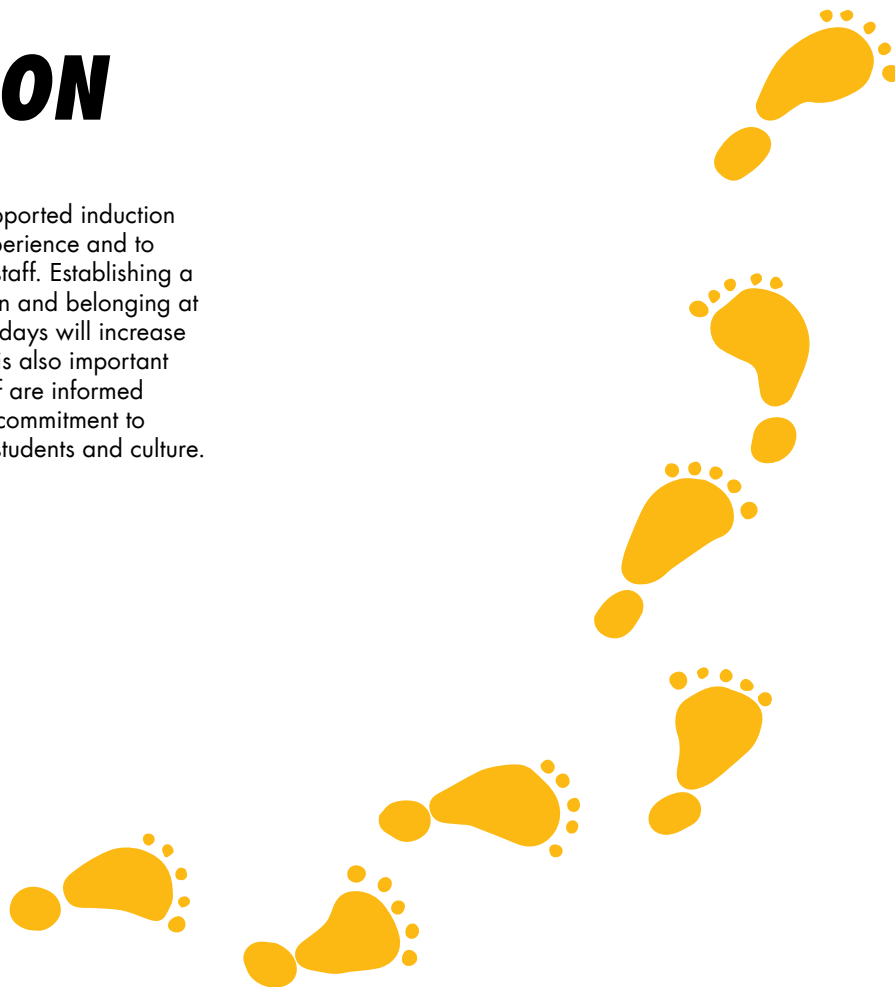
While the 3% target is a nationally mandated target to which the University aspires, the University commits to achieving and maintaining, at a minimum, a percentage of the workforce that is the same percentage of Aboriginal people in the broader population. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census data for Aboriginal (and Torres Strait Islanders) in Victoria is 0.9% and in the West of Melbourne 0.7%.

| ACTION   | RESPONSIBILITY   | TIMEFRAME  | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1.1 Continue to maintain a candidate talent pool and provide assistance to Aboriginal applicants as required   | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer  | Ongoing  | Candidates from talent pool apply for role at VU                                    |
| 1.2 Enable and ensure Aboriginal students participate in employment at the University where opportunities exist  | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Aboriginal Student Support Officer<br>People & Culture<br>Recruitment<br>Moondani Balluk  | From 2019  | Percentage of Aboriginal students employed as staff                                 |
| 1.3 Raise awareness of VU as a supportive workplace for Aboriginal people through community liaison and promotion                                      | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Aboriginal Student Support Officer<br>Indigenous Community Liaison Officer –Industry Project –VU Polytechnic<br>Moondani Balluk | Ongoing  | Community member contact with Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer     |
| 1.4 Increase the Aboriginal academic workforce by supporting the growth of Aboriginal students in higher degrees by research (HDR)                     | PVC Research<br>People & Culture   | 2019   | Aboriginal academic capacity enhanced, increased numbers of Aboriginal HDR students |
| 1.5 Ensure senior leaders of the University understand the context of the University's employment aspirations by attending cultural awareness sessions | People & Culture   | Ongoing  | Leaders support and promote engagement with Aboriginal matters including employment |
| 1.6 Hiring managers are aware of and consider the University's commitment to increase Aboriginal employment  | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>People & Culture  | Workshops conducted from 2019 and quarterly thereafter | Proactive engagement with and support to employ Aboriginal staff                    |
| 1.7 Identify external and internal funding sources that can support employment of Aboriginal staff   | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>People & Culture<br>Recruitment   | From 2019  | Increased numbers of Aboriginal staff with Aboriginal matters, including employment |



# 2. INDUCTION

Appropriate tailored and supported induction is vital to a positive work experience and to retention of new Aboriginal staff. Establishing a sense of welcome, connection and belonging at the University in the first few days will increase the likelihood of retention. It is also important that new non-Aboriginal staff are informed and aware of the University commitment to supporting Aboriginal staff, students and culture.



| ACTION  | RESPONSIBILITY  | TIMEFRAME      | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS   |
|---|---|----------------|--|
| <p><b>2.1</b> Provide tailored induction for Aboriginal staff. Induction may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising for the new staff member to meet other Departmental staff, tour of University grounds and services</li> <li>• Coordinating staff card, library access and IT support</li> <li>• Coordinating social introduction to Moondani Balluk and other Aboriginal staff</li> </ul> | <p>Aboriginal Employment &amp; Community Liaison Officer</p>  | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>100% Aboriginal staff complete induction</p>  |
| <p><b>2.2</b> Provide managers with appropriate information when employing an Aboriginal staff member</p>   | <p>Aboriginal Employment &amp; Community Liaison Officer<br/>Recruitment</p>  | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Maintain Aboriginal staff engagement measures as per Your Voice Survey; 100% managers receive appropriate information</p> |
| <p><b>2.3</b> Ensure all new staff are informed of the University's commitment to supporting Aboriginal staff and culture</p>   | <p>Aboriginal Employment &amp; Community Liaison Officer.<br/>Recruitment<br/>People &amp; Culture<br/>Organisational Development</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>100% new staff receive information as part of induction</p>   |

# 3. RETENTION AND WELLBEING

Ensuring Aboriginal staff feel safe and valued in the workplace is important to staff wellbeing and retention. Moondani Balluk is a central site of support, community and connection for Aboriginal staff. Moondani Balluk means 'embrace people' in the Woiworrung language of the Wurrendjeri people.

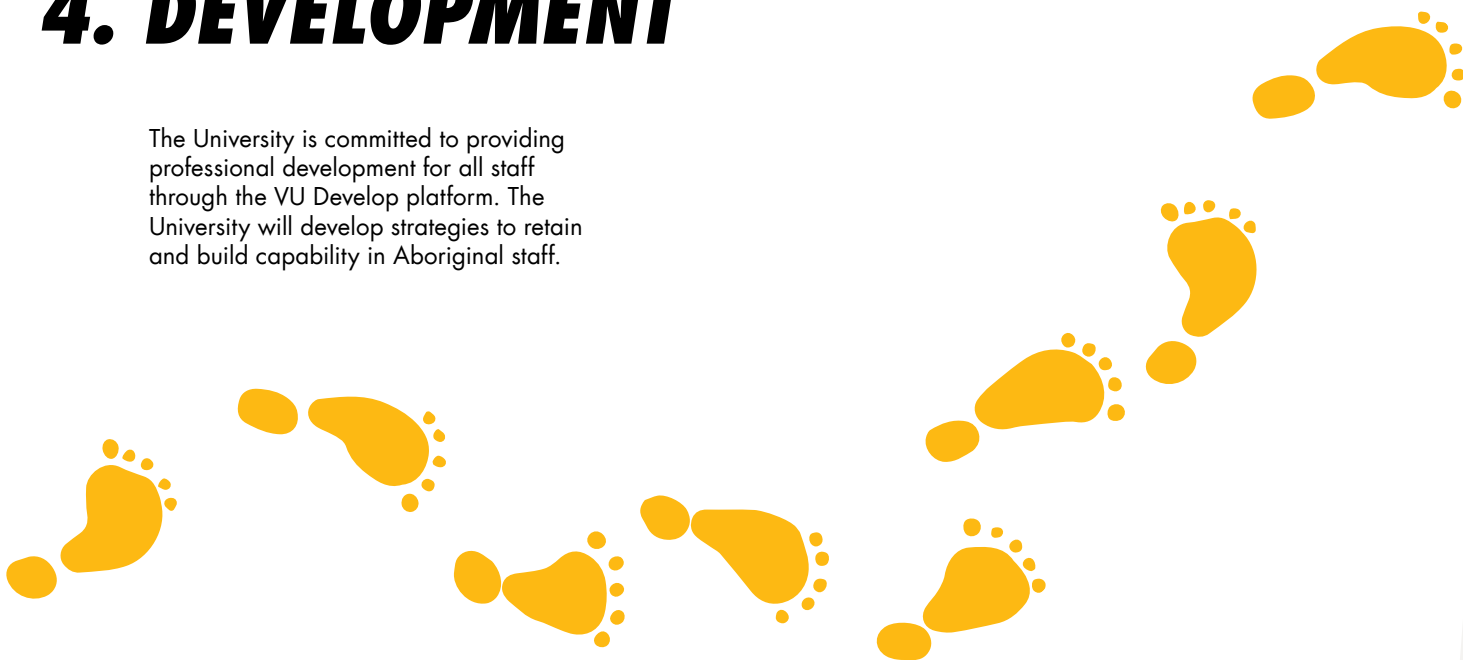
To support the work of Moondani Balluk, the retention and wellbeing actions aim to create a culturally sensitive environment that welcomes, nurtures and recreates community for Aboriginal staff, enabling them to thrive and belong.



| ACTIONS   | RESPONSIBILITY   | TIMEFRAME | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  |
|---|--|-----------|---|
| <b>3.1</b> Provide and promote tailored support for Aboriginal staff through regular contact  | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer.   | Ongoing   | Retention of Aboriginal staff; lower turnover; regular contact meetings   |
| <b>3.2</b> Ensure Aboriginal staff are informed and updated on the range of benefits and support available for all staff, and of cultural leave in particular   | Managers<br>Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Organisational Development          | Ongoing   | Uptake of cultural leave; better Aboriginal staff engagement  |
| <b>3.3</b> Ensure Aboriginal staff have additional and priority access to support with managing University systems, processes and procedures as required  | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer as first contact                                   | Ongoing   | Lower turnover  |
| <b>3.4</b> Develop resources for managers who employ Aboriginal staff to build cultural awareness and sensitivity including understanding of the importance and significance of cultural leave and recognition and appreciation of the additional workload of Aboriginal staff. Appreciation of the additional workload can be incorporated into workload planning, performance assessment and promotion processes. | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Moondani Balluk<br>Capability & Culture         | 2019      | 100% of managers who employ Aboriginal staff receive information about additional workload.   |
| <b>3.5</b> Educate and inform staff about Aboriginal culture  | People & Culture<br>Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Moondani Balluk             | Ongoing   | Minimum of four face-to-face cultural awareness sessions per year available for managers, all staff and specific cohorts; promotion and awareness of NAIDOC week and other days of significance |
| <b>3.6</b> Provide ongoing support and mentoring as appropriate for professional and academic staff during probation period and as required   | Managers<br>Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>People & Culture<br>Moondani Balluk | Ongoing   | 100% of managers who employ Aboriginal staff receive information regarding mentoring and support for professional and academic staff and offer this support to Aboriginal staff                 |

# 4. DEVELOPMENT

The University is committed to providing professional development for all staff through the VU Develop platform. The University will develop strategies to retain and build capability in Aboriginal staff.



| ACTIONS  | RESPONSIBILITY  | TIMEFRAME        | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS   |
|--|---|------------------|--|
| <b>4.1</b> Identify unique and appropriate support systems, including the development of professional staff development initiatives tailored for Aboriginal staff      | Managers<br>Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>People & Culture   | 2019 and ongoing | 90% of ongoing Aboriginal staff have a VU Develop plan that identifies individual professional development needs and activities to address |
| <b>4.2</b> Develop a Cultural Safety framework and guidelines to inform managers and staff of what constitutes a culturally respectful and responsive work environment | People & Culture<br>Managers<br>Cultural Diversity  | 2019 and ongoing | Better staff engagement overall; Diversity & Inclusion recognised as key strength by staff   |
| <b>4.3</b> Encourage and enable Aboriginal staff to pursue further studies   | Managers<br>Deans   | Ongoing          | Increased numbers of Aboriginal staff undertaking further studies, identified and recorded as part of individual VU Develop plans          |
| <b>4.4</b> Encourage and facilitate skills and knowledge development for Aboriginal community members at VU as part of a pathway to employment at VU                   | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Indigenous Community Liaison Officer – Industry Project<br>Transition Education – VU Polytechnic | From 2019        | Transition of Aboriginal staff from pathway programs to employment at VU (and elsewhere)   |

# 5. PROMOTION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Building VU's relationship and profile with Aboriginal communities is vital to the success of the employment strategy. To assist in the achievement of employment goals and aspirations, VU should ensure that the Aboriginal community is aware of the University as a culturally safe place to work and that it aspires to be a leader in employing and supporting Aboriginal people.



| ACTION  | RESPONSIBILITY   | TIMEFRAME | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  |
|---|--|-----------|---|
| <b>5.1</b> Support the engagement and participation of VUs Aboriginal staff in community and national consultations on Aboriginal matters   | Managers   | Ongoing   | Managers enable Aboriginal staff to attend community and national consultations; annual reminders to Managers of Aboriginal staff about this responsibility |
| <b>5.2</b> Promote VU to Aboriginal communities   | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>External Relations Media  | Ongoing   | Minimum attendance and /or participation in 6 Aboriginal community events/visits per year   |
| <b>5.3</b> Actively participate in Aboriginal employment forums and other forums where the University can engage with Aboriginal people   | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Transition Education – VU Polytechnic<br>Aboriginal Student Support Officer   | From 2019 | Increased awareness and reputation within Aboriginal community  |
| <b>5.4</b> Develop a co-ordinated approach to liaise with local Councils to promote awareness and engagement and form partnerships to strengthen the local Aboriginal community as appropriate                                    | Aboriginal Employment & Community Liaison Officer<br>Aboriginal Student Support Officer<br>Indigenous Community Liaison Officer- Industry Project<br>VU Polytechnic Transition Education | Ongoing   | Partner and collaboration opportunities; Councils engaging with VU  |
| <b>5.5</b> Ensure leaders at all levels across the University are informed, aware and equipped to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal staff and are informed and aware of the broader aspirations of the Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy | People & Culture<br>Moondani Balluk  | Ongoing   | Leaders advocate for Aboriginal staff and contribute to Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy outcomes  |

# STAFF STORY

## MARCUS BROOKE

Marcus is a Gunditjmara man with connections to Framlingham, South West Victoria, near Warrnambool.

I studied at VU for 4 years, from 2010 – 2013. Throughout those 4 years I completed a Diploma of IT, Advanced Diploma of IT and a Bachelor of Interactive Media. During my studies I worked as a Student Rover for 3 years in the Academic Support Lab (now known as the Learning Hub) at the Footscray Nicholson campus, where I assisted students with academic support, utilising and accessing various services at VU. I also worked as an eLearning Support assistant for 6 months.

I chose to study at VU for a few reasons. One of the main reasons was Moondani Balluk itself. When you think of VU and Aboriginal support/studies you instantly think of Karen Jackson (KJ) and her reputation. I was told by family members who had worked and liaised with KJ that there was a strong support structure for Indigenous students at VU and that she would “look after me”. Having friendly faces you know you can rely on straight off the bat, in a massive and at times uncertain place helped a lot with my decision to eventually attend VU.

Knowing Moondani Balluk was available at any time made me feel more at ease with studies as well.

Whilst studying at high school, I did some work at the Gathering Place (Medical & Allied Health) which gave me exposure to working in an Indigenous organisation and then towards the end of my studies I picked up some volunteer work, once a week at a local semi-private high school in their IT department. Eventually, after I completed my studies I was put on a paid contract and continued working at the school. I continued with the retail role I had had since high school, where I eventually transitioned into a part time manager. Juggling two different roles with completely different objectives, responsibilities, tasks and standards in a day, was tough, but I feel this helped massively with my organisation, prioritising and time management skills and working with different groups of people.

After my role at the school finished, I started working at VU as a Data Integrity Officer (basically data entry) then filled in for a staff member on study leave for 6 months in People and Culture as the Indigenous Employment and Community Liaison Officer.



I then transitioned into my current, full-time role as Aboriginal Student Support Officer at VU. In this role I provide first-contact support, engagement, information and referral to current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This role helps Aboriginal students successfully navigate university life and processes and in a way is an extension of my role as Student Rover, which I undertook when I was studying at VU. I also work closely with Moondani Balluk and occasionally act as Director when KJ (Karen Jackson) is absent.

My current role is personally rewarding, as you feel like you are making a difference to people's lives. For many of us we are the first in our immediate family to go to University, myself included, so being able to pass on knowledge and being available to support and assist our Indigenous cohort, to ensure they are as successful as possible with all that is involved with studies really appeals to me. I have learned first-hand the doors that can be opened with studies and the opportunities that are out there, which can contribute to much wider and better outcomes for Aboriginal people. The support from Moondani Balluk has been great as well.

# STUDENT STORY

## SHARNA CLARKE

I completed my Bachelor of Nursing at Victoria University and graduated in 2018.

I chose to study at VU because it is close to my home. I live in St. Albans and studied at the St. Albans campus. The University has campuses in the city, Werribee and Footscray. Depending on what you are studying, you spend most of your time at a home campus.

My mum also studied at VU, also at the St Albans campus where she studied community services and Mumgu-Dhal. My mum recommended Victoria University to me because it is a lot more welcoming compared to other places and is a culturally safe space, and that's important.

Victoria University is student focused. Each student has different needs and VU takes that into account. They're very flexible with the learning approaches.

I have been engaging with Moondani Balluk for four years now, since 2014, when I started my studies. They have been really supportive and assisted a lot with choosing my courses and how to navigate the university system. It's been very helpful

When I started at VU, there were a lot of administrative and enrolment issues. Karen Jackson, Director of Moondani Balluk, helped me enrol into Kyinandoo (Indigenous studies) and adjust to uni life before I switched over to a Nursing degree. Kyinandoo acted as a bridging course and a foundation to build on and eased me into higher education and studying. I would not be here if it wasn't for Moondani Balluk and for Karen Jackson who supported me in transitioning into life at VU from high school, which was difficult at the time. I was the only Aboriginal student that I knew going to VU. I didn't know what Higher Education was or what similar educational terms meant, which made things confusing sometimes. With the help of Moondani Balluk and KJ I was able to have a smooth transition.

My teachers helped me and supported me, and enabled me to understand self-development, self-practice and self-learning, which helped me be the best student and person I can possibly be.

I would definitely recommend VU to future students. VU and Moondani Balluk are grassroots and organic in the ways it operates. The University and Moondani Balluk are very involved in community and grassroots organisation and working closely with Footscray organisations so you definitely feel you are part of community.



Western Health.

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Aboriginal painting by  
Marjorie Jean Mason

The painting depicts nine campuses, five in the middle and four on the outer, around four circles representing lecture, classrooms and meeting places.

There are footsteps which signify travelling throughout the buildings.

The coloured spirit figures depict many different cultures, studying and working together, with the hands signifying the actual practical work.



# YANNONEIT EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY 2019 – 2021

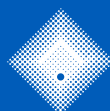


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