SAGE

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Cygnet Awards

for the SAGE Athena Swan
Accreditation Pathway

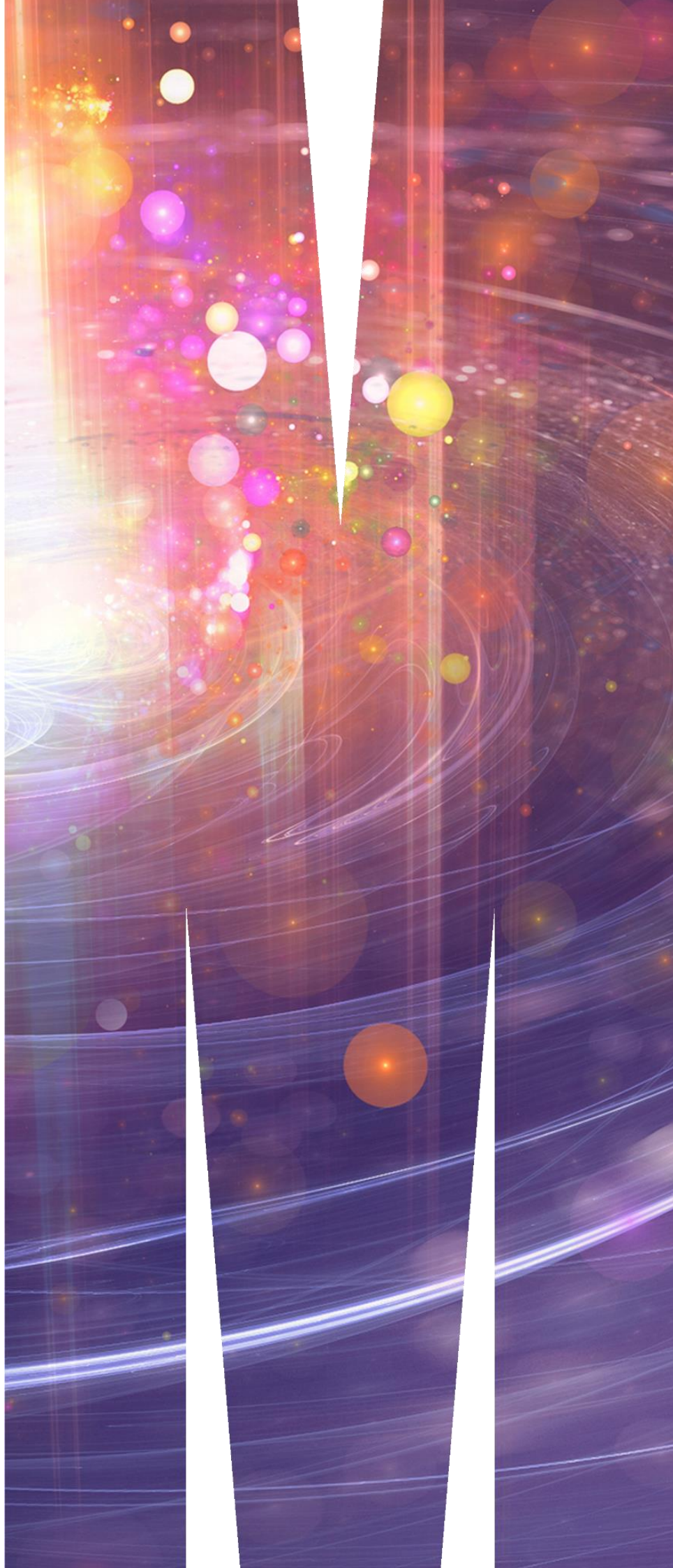## Monash University
Application Form

Name of Institution	Monash University
Date of Application	31 October 2023
Contact for Application	A/Prof Laura Jobson, Chair of Athena SWAN Steering Group Dr Lucie Joschko, Director Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Email	laura.jobson@monash.edu lucie.joschko@monash.edu
Telephone No.	0436 025 986

SAGE
ATHENA SWAN
CYGNET AWARD
APPLICATION

Indigenous Recruitment

October 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Monash University recognises that its Australian campuses are located on the unceded lands of the people of the Kulin nations, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.

Monash is committed to fostering a society that recognises, respects and includes Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge. The University will contribute to the creation of this society by working with and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and knowledge, as well as Indigenous peoples of other places where Monash has a campus or major presence.

Monash University is committed to supporting and contributing to:

- The Uluru Statement from the Heart process for a First Nations Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia; and
- Treaty discussions in the state of Victoria and the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission.

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Monash University: SAGE CYGNET #2

	✔ Current Cygnet	Barrier List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier		
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier		
Institution-wide	✔	Indigenous recruitment
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

Section	Actual Word Count
Cygnet Submission	2095
Key Barriers	180
Evidence of Barriers	720
Activities and Outputs	193
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KEY BARRIER

Barrier to Indigenous staff recruitment

Monash University has had an enduring commitment to Indigenous[1] cultures for sixty years. This commenced with the establishment of the Centre for Research into Aboriginal Affairs in 1964 making Monash the first Australian University to support research and teaching into contemporary Indigenous society.

In 2013, Monash University launched its first *Reconciliation Action Plan* where the commitment to recruit, support and retain Indigenous students and staff was clearly articulated. In 2015, the Indigenous Advisory Council established an Indigenous Employment Working Party chaired by the Provost, charged with developing strategies to increase and retain Indigenous academic staff.

Despite our strong commitment to Indigenous employment, Monash has not always performed well in all of our endeavours and progress has been slow. While this application documents a level of progress in Indigenous recruitment in starting to dismantle barriers, we recognise we have a long way to go in this space. This submission openly acknowledges that our 'business as usual' ways of operating were not working.

Recruitment initiatives were not Indigenous-led

Job interview styles and candidate care were based on the colonial power dynamic

Lack of recruitment pathways and pipelines to support Indigenous students into employment

Barriers to recruiting Indigenous talent

Lack of Indigenous core roles to develop and drive Indigenous employment strategies

Outdated Indigenous Employment Policy

Caps on full-time equivalence (FTE) of employees which restricted the creation of new positions
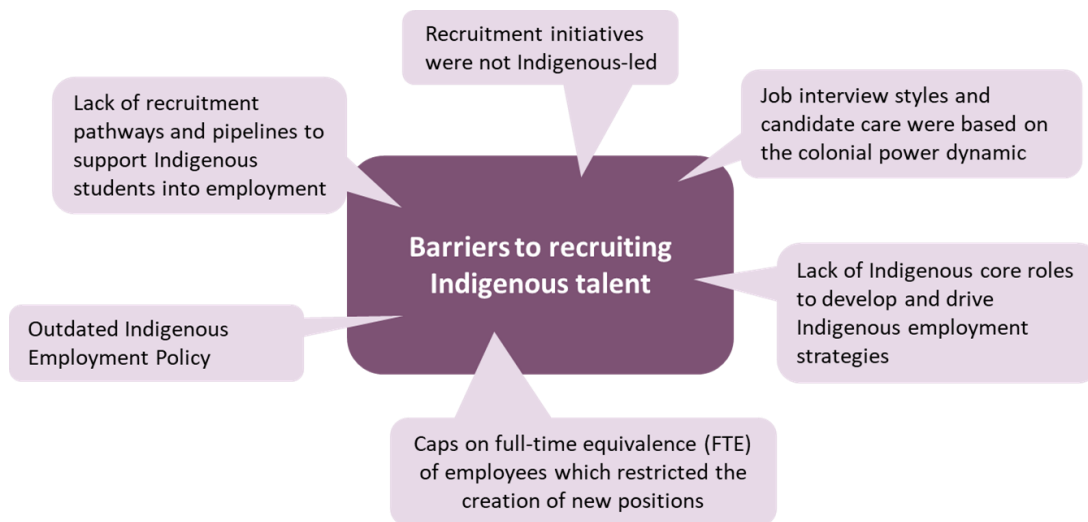
Figure 1 - Barriers to recruiting Indigenous talent

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[1] In this report Indigenous refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

As part of our Athena SWAN Self-Assessment process (2016-2018), we identified barriers relating to recruitment that were predominantly focused on gender, with limited attention and actions for Indigenous applicants. During the implementation of the Athena SWAN Action Plan (2018-2021), it became apparent that Indigenous employment was subject to systemic and structural barriers that affected our ability to recruit Indigenous talent in order to improve the representation of Indigenous staff at Monash (**Figure 1**).

These barriers were embedded within structures and systems that supported ongoing settler colonial power dynamics and included:

- lack of prioritisation of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing;
- initiatives were not Indigenous-led or strength-based, and
- lack of Indigenous staff in recognised leadership positions to drive strategies for the recruitment of Indigenous people.

Despite the University's history of commitment to Indigenous employment, the number of Indigenous staff had plateaued from 2018 to 2021 (**Figure 2).** Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic the numbers decreased. The Higher Education sector experienced economic challenges and sharp declines in revenue during this time. Consequently, Monash adopted prudent measures, including an external recruitment pause. Whilst this allowed channelling focus towards retaining existing staff, it hindered increasing Indigenous staff number progress and replacing any departures.

Our data analysis also revealed that professional staff and women were better represented among Indigenous staff (**Figures 3 and 4**). Under-representation of Indigenous staff in more senior roles also pointed to potential barriers, with only 10% of Indigenous staff in 2018 filling positions of HEW 9+, and Level D+ positions (**Figure 5**).

Although outside the scope of this submission, retention was identified as an important area of focus for future actions, with women's retention rate below men's retention rates in 2020 (see **Action Plan**).
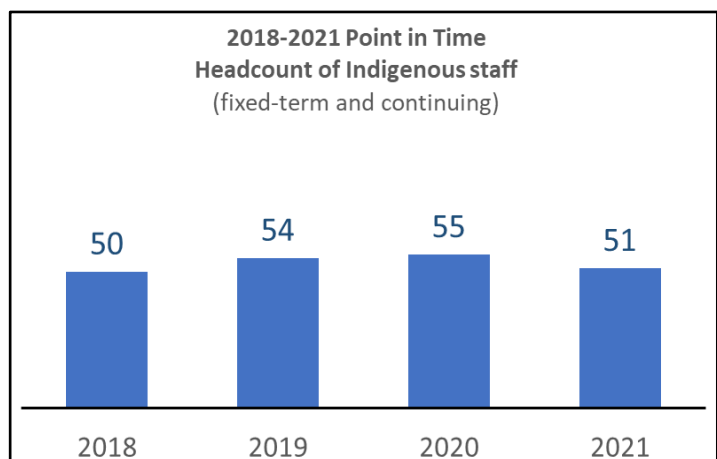

Figure 2 - Headcount of Indigenous fixed-term and continuing staff (2018-2021)
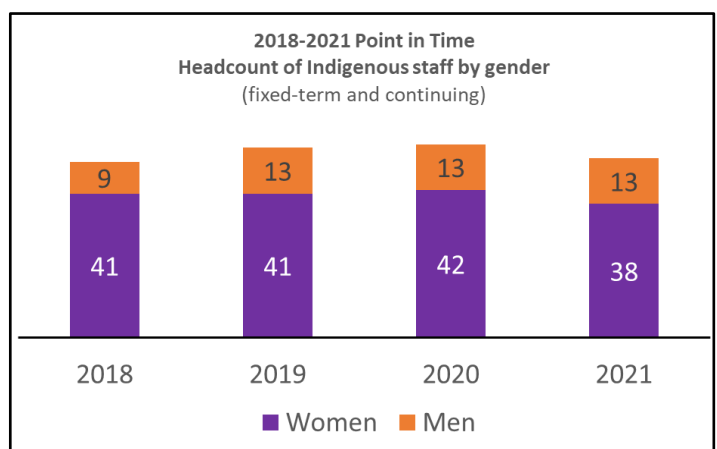
Figure 3 - Headcount of Indigenous staff by gender (2018-2021)

Importance of senior Indigenous roles

Over the years, Monash was proud to have Indigenous Directors leading the Indigenous Studies Centre (now Monash Indigenous Studies Centre), culminating in the appointments of Professor Eleanor Bourke (1999) and Professor Lynette Russell (2001) into the Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies with dual responsibility as Director, Monash Aboriginal Programs. Additionally, Monash is proud to have an Elder-in-Residence for more than 15 years, a position held by Aunty Diane Singh, a Yorta-Yorta and Wemba-Wemba Elder.

It became apparent, however, that among key enablers to instituting transformative change was improving the representation of Indigenous staff in more senior roles and to further appoint Indigenous leaders including the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and Indigenous faculty leadership positions.

Lack of Indigenous HR Professionals

Indigenous employment strategies and initiatives had no oversight of Indigenous HR professionals. Monash did not previously advertise Indigenous-identified roles. Recruitment activities continued to be based on the colonial power dynamic that did not prioritise Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. This manifested in the low conversion rate from applications to interviews, which is depicted as the percentage of Indigenous applicants who were shortlisted (**Figure 6**).

Recruitment process

Between 2016 and 2021, 391 Indigenous people (54% women) applied for a position at Monash but only resulting in 40 appointments (**Figure 7**).

Firstly, analysis of job application data revealed that shortlisting rates of Indigenous candidates were low (**Figure 6**), likely due to the recruitment process lacking a dedicated focus on Indigenous candidate care.
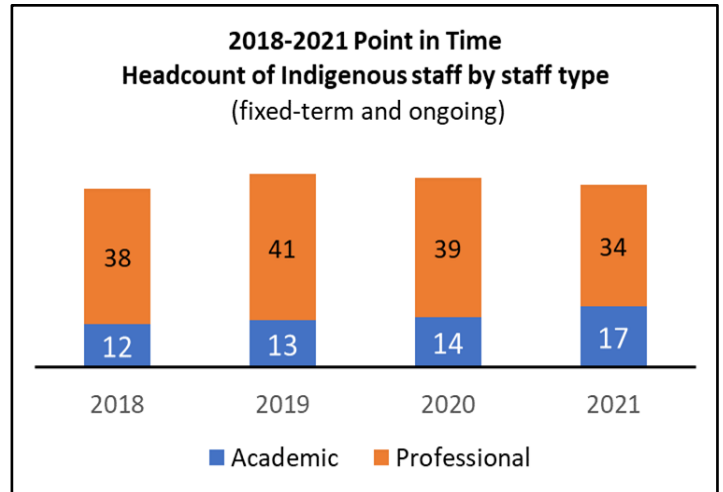
Figure 4 - Headcount of Indigenous staff by academic and professional roles (2018-21)
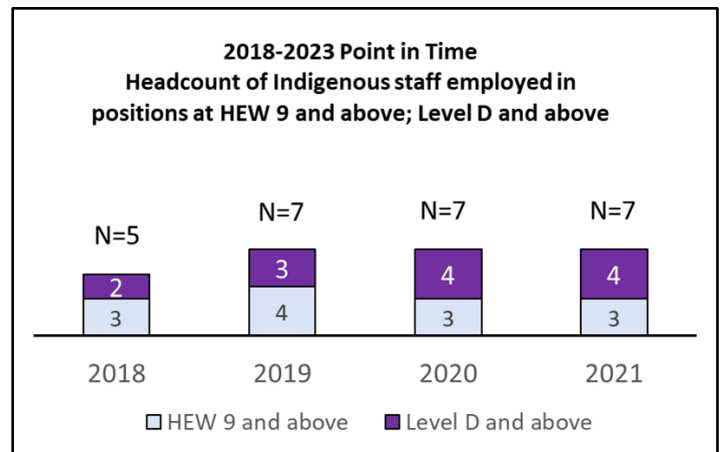
Figure 5 - Headcount of Indigenous staff employed at HEW 9 and above; Level D and above

Measure	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Applicants	65	69	73	96	28	60
Shortlisted	12	15	14	31	11	12

Figure 6 - Proportion of Indigenous applicants shortlisted for an interview
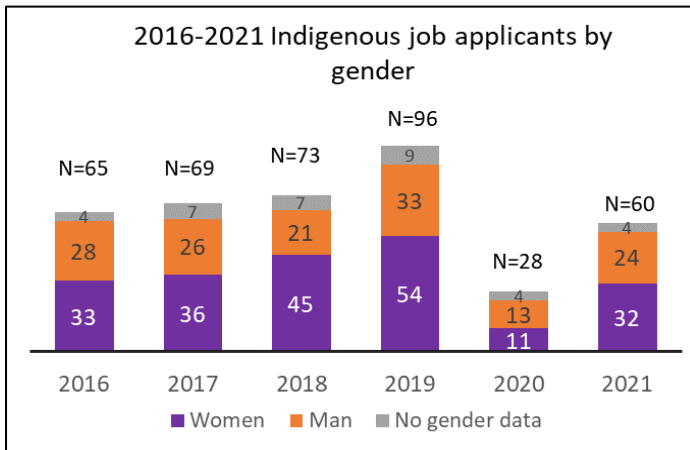
Figure 7 - Indigenous job applicants by gender (2016-2021)
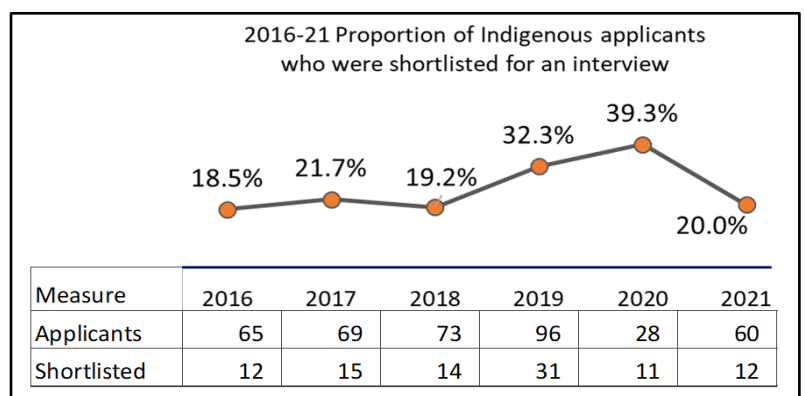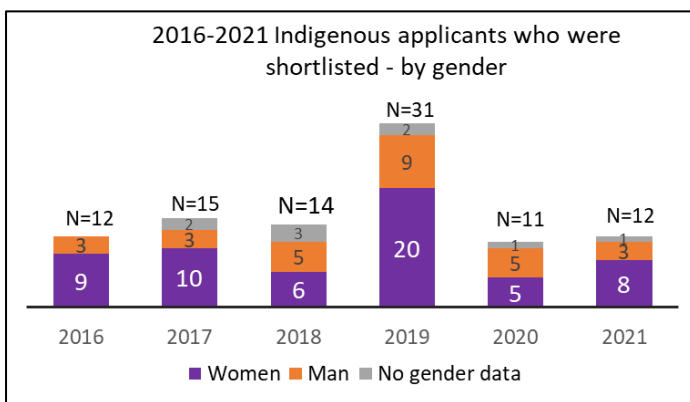

Figure 8 - Indigenous applicants shortlisted for an interview by gender (2016-2021)

Gender	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Women	27.3%	27.8%	13.3%	37.0%	45.5%	25.0%
Men	10.7%	11.5%	23.8%	27.3%	38.5%	12.5%
No data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%
Total	18.5%	21.7%	19.2%	32.3%	39.3%	20.0%

Table 1 - Shortlisting rate of Indigenous applicants by gender (2016-2021)

Measure	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Shortlisted	12	15	14	31	11	12
Offers	7	9	5	9	5	5
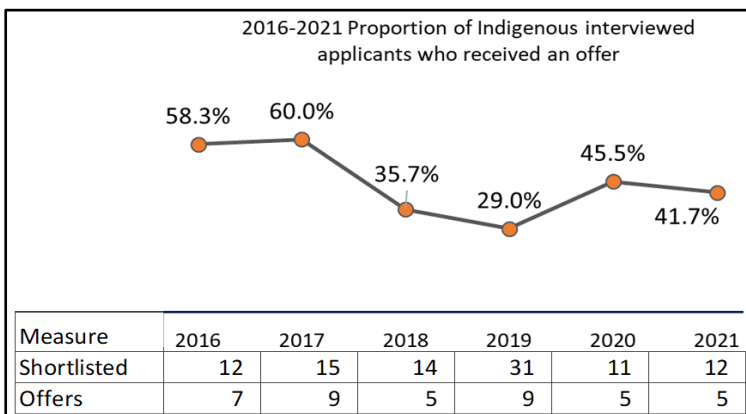
Figure 9 - Indigenous applicants who were interviewed and received an offer (2016-2021)

Of those who were interviewed, the average offer rate was 42% (**Figure 9**). However, due to low numbers of job applicants with offers, it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions on any gendered impacts.

Similar to the pattern in shortlisting data, the conversion from interviews to offers showed annual variation by gender (**Table 1**).

Most importantly, our analysis of recruitment data showed lost opportunities to prioritise Indigenous talent, suggesting our processes were failing Indigenous applicants (**Figures 6 and 9**).

Indigenous Employment Policy

While recruitment practices were to be guided by Monash University's "Advancing Indigenous Employment Policy" (replaced in 2022), they were not Indigenous-led, lacked diverse recruitment pathways and did not empower recruiters to advertise Indigenous-identified roles. To remove some of these structural barriers, the Policy required a significant overhaul.

The role of "FTE employment caps"

The identified challenges were further compounded by the requirement to operate within a set of closely monitored caps on full-time equivalence (FTE) of staff employed within all business units[2].

This operational requirement meant that Indigenous candidates were only able to apply for advertised vacancies, with very little flexibility to develop new positions tailored to their experiences or career interests.

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[2] Caps on Full-Time Equivalence (FTE) of staff in universities refer to the threshold requirements of full-time equivalent employees employed across the organisational structure.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

During our self-assessment process (2016-2018), we became acutely aware that initiatives aimed at increasing the number and proportion of Indigenous staff did not yield the desired outcomes, and this pattern was very challenging to shift. On further reflection, actions captured in our four-year Athena SWAN Action Plan were limited and predominantly focused on 'quick wins' to gain a more immediate momentum (**Table 2**). Whilst they were effectively implemented, we acknowledge these actions alone were not sufficiently robust to achieve the removal of engrained systematic and structural barriers to Indigenous employment. Therefore, this application summarises collective actions that were progressed across the University, in partnership with relevant stakeholder groups at Monash (**Table 3**).

Table 2 - Athena SWAN Action Plan actions designed to improve Indigenous employment outcomes

Athena SWAN actions designed to improve Indigenous employment outcomes	Implementation notes
Promote Monash as a destination for Indigenous staff by improving web pages dedicated to content for Indigenous staff	Multi-stages process culminating in the development of a comprehensive job site dedicated to Indigenous Australians looking for employment opportunities at Monash University.
Develop a recruitment campaign for Indigenous staff utilising a range of media that articulates our commitment to increasing the participation of Indigenous staff	In March 2022, Monash began advertising job vacancies through Indigenous media channels and niche boards, such as Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times and Indigenous Employment Services. Between January 2019 and March 2022, these niche advertising boards were used sparingly with a total of 11 job ads placed in 2 channels (Koori Mail and Ethical Jobs). From March 2022 to June 2023 (approx. 16 months), Monash placed 66 job ads through five different Indigenous advertising boards.
Establish a new "Staff Diversity and Inclusion" report containing data on gender composition of staff, including Indigenous status.	Multi-year process resulting in the development of user-friendly interactive data dashboards in PowerBI - an interactive visualisation platform. These dashboards are dedicated to monitoring Indigenous staff data, including historical trends (2021).

Our approach to removing systemic barriers to Indigenous employment, identified over a period of 2018-2021, was supported by the University's commitment to increase Indigenous staffing levels to population parity by 2030. Beyond our Strategic Plan *Impact 2030*, Indigenous employment objectives are also clearly articulated in Monash's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025*, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019-2030*, and the *Indigenous Employment Action Plan*.

Activities presented in **Table 3** demonstrate a whole-of-University approach, clustered across four main categories:

1. University demonstrating commitment to Indigenous-advancement
2. Introducing new pathways to Indigenous employment
3. Ensuring that Indigenous recruitment is led by Indigenous HR Professionals
4. Developing Indigenous Employment Policy that supports affirmative measures

Table 3 - Monash University-wide actions designed to dismantle barriers to Indigenous recruitment

Activity Category 1: Demonstrating commitment to Indigenous-led advancements	
Outputs	Description / Rationale
1.1 Introduced inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous (PVC Indigenous) position - 2018	The position leads the development and implementation of the University's Indigenous strategy, strengthening both Indigenous leadership within the University and extensive Indigenous outreach and engagement. New PVC Indigenous was appointed in 2022.
1.2 Introduced Indigenous Faculty Leadership Positions - Associate Dean Indigenous 2022 onwards	Senior Indigenous leadership positions based in faculties to lead the delivery and enhancement of the Faculties strategic plans and visions for decisions and matters impacting Indigenous peoples. This also ensures Indigenous leaders are providing thought leadership and leading important public debates nationally and globally.
1.3 Establishment of William Cooper Institute in 2019	The Institute was established in 2019, becoming an important hub dedicated to connecting research, learning and engagement for Indigenous peoples by fostering dialogue, reconciliation and deeper understanding of Indigenous perspectives within the Australian community. The Institute plays a significant role in fostering a sense of belonging for Indigenous staff.
1.4 Launched *Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019 –2030*	The Framework is the first of its kind at Monash, pulling together all of Monash's ambitions across the Indigenous space. It was developed to closely align with the University's overarching strategy and its component education and research agendas.

Activity Category 2: Introducing new pathways to Indigenous employment	
Outputs	Description / Rationale
2.1 Introduced Indigenous Graduate Program, pathway to professional employment - 2022	Under the leadership of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), this Program creates an effective pipeline to HEW 6 employment for Indigenous students who are nearing course completion (not limited to Monash students). This initiative supports several of the University's aspirations set out in the *Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019-2030*. Monash further provided funding to create the Indigenous Graduate Program Coordinator, situated within the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), role to ensure the Program participants receive a dedicated focus.
2.2 Introduced Indigenous Traineeship program, entry-level training pathway to employment through HEW 2 positions - 2017	Monash University provided strategic initiative funding for the Traineeship program by funding all salaries of Indigenous trainees. This 2-year program also funded Certificate IV in Business through AFL Sportsready, with aim to lead to an ongoing HEW 3 position upon successful completion of the 2-year program.
2.3 Creating bespoke roles for Indigenous candidates who are interested in working at Monash 2022	This strength-based approach allows for the creation of bespoke positions in fields aligned with a candidate's professional career goals. The newly appointed Indigenous Talent Partner, working in HR, is focussed on establishing relationships with business partners across the institution with the aim to identify current and future employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples.

Activity Category 3: Ensuring that Indigenous recruitment is led by Indigenous HR professionals	
Outputs	**Description / Rationale**
3.1 Established an Indigenous Employment team in Human Resources with two dedicated full-time Indigenous roles to lead Indigenous recruitment and engagement - 2022	Appointment of two continuing roles in HR: i) Indigenous Employment and Engagement Manager, and ii) Indigenous Talent Partner. These positions ensure business processes, career pathways and onboarding activities are culturally best practice. The team's experience and expertise are pivotal in leading and further shaping employment initiatives, including ensuring culturally appropriate approaches to establishing, advertising and recruiting for Indigenous identified positions. As these staff members are connected to the community, they are able to establish relationships with candidates and offer support and guidance on job specifications, job applications, and interview preparation.
3.2 Shifted from traditional formal interview formats to Indigenous-led culturally responsive ways - 2022	As recruitment processes are Indigenous-led, the process includes greater adherence to culturally responsive ways and community focused ways of doing. For interviews for 'identified roles' this can include Yarning.
3.3 Introduced culturally responsive candidate care	Candidate care for Indigenous job applicants involves a greater culturally informed approach, which acknowledges applicant's unique experiences and backgrounds.

Activity Category 4: Develop Indigenous Employment Policy that supports affirmative measures	
Outputs	**Description / Rationale**
4.1 Reviewed Indigenous Employment Policy and Procedure to support recruitment of Indigenous prioritised and identified roles. 2021-2022	Led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), in partnership with Indigenous employees, the Indigenous Employment Policy underwent a significant overhaul to outline a more robust approach to recruitment, retention and advancement of Indigenous staff, and to foster a culturally-informed workforce. The launch of the updated Policy and Procedure saw Indigenous leaders and other senior stakeholders implement a robust communication plan.
4.2 Senior leaders endorsed the introduction of a University-wide exemption whereby all Indigenous positions are no longer required to fit within prescribed employment caps on full-time equivalence (FTE) of employees - 2022	One of the identified issues was the requirement to operate within set caps on full-time equivalence (FTE) of staff employed within all business units. Adherence to this approach meant only recruiting new Indigenous staff into established vacancies. This unprecedented decision removed a significant barrier to Indigenous hiring, opening unrestricted possibilities for creating new bespoke positions. Since Indigenous appointments may be FTE exempt with approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) across Monash, we were able to generate new meaningful positions in collaboration with hiring managers and heads of units, under the guidance of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and Associate Deans (Indigenous).
4.3 Established a new recruitment strategy that supports advertising Indigenous identified positions - 2022	'Identified positions' are only for Indigenous candidates. Promotion of these positions is released to Indigenous talent communities prior to going live to advertising. If an Indigenous candidate expresses interest in a position, the position is on hold and the applicant has up to five working days to prepare and submit their application.

OUTCOMES

Methodology

Figure 10 - Summary of outcomes measures

Staff data

Since the implementation of actions designed to improve Indigenous staffing numbers there has been an increase in the number of Indigenous staff at Monash (**Figures 11 and 12**). Growth has been observed across all genders.
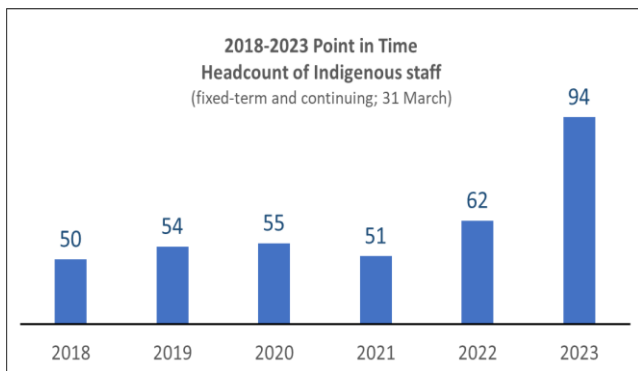
Figure 11 - Headcount of Indigenous staff (2018-2023)
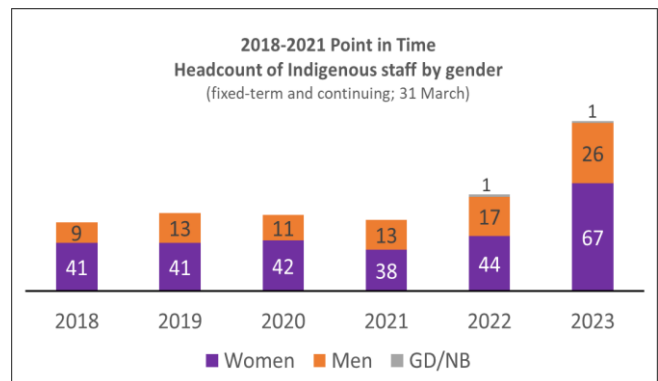
Figure 12 - Headcount of Indigenous staff by gender (2018-

Positions currently held by Indigenous staff are distributed across 15 primary organisation units, with 53% Indigenous staff based in 9 out of 10 Monash's faculties, and the remaining 47% employed in 6 central portfolios. At a more granular level, the 94 positions are based in 36 different departments with 4.3% (n=4) based at the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and 7.4% (n=7) at the William Cooper Institute, a hub for Indigenous research, learning and engagement.
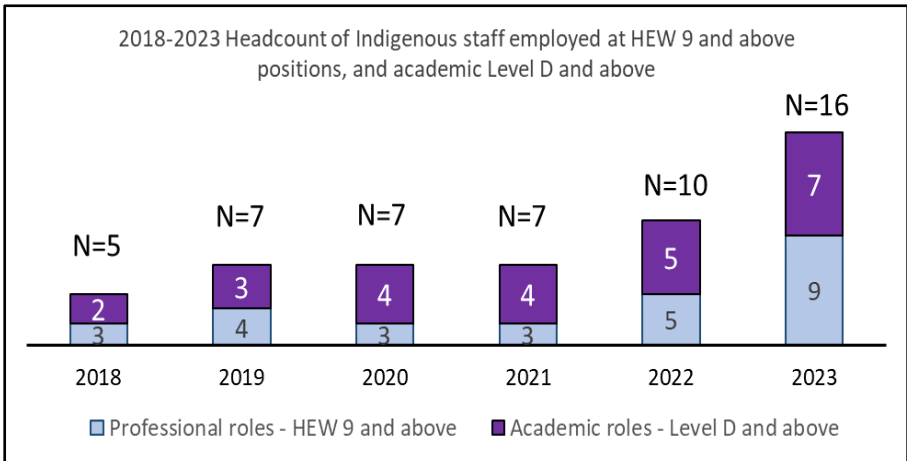
Figure 13 - Number of Indigenous staff employed at HEW 9 and above; Level D and above

Appointments of Indigenous staff into more senior roles of HEW 9 and above, and Associate Professor and Professor (Level D and above) resulted in an increased representation in 2023.

While there were no improvements (n=7) between 2019 to 2021, the number of Indigenous staff employed in these positions more than doubled by 2023 (**Figure 13**). Improvements were observed in both academic positions and professional roles.

Of all Indigenous roles in 2018, 10% (n=5) were at these more senior positions, whereas in 2023 this representation rose to 17% (16 out of 94). While this data represents a combination of promotions and recruitment[3], the outcome signals improvements in the University's commitment to growing Indigenous leadership roles, which in turn enhances our organisational ability to attract Indigenous talent.

In addition to the appointment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) position in 2022, four new leadership roles - Associate Deans (Indigenous) – were successfully filled in the Faculty of Arts, Education, Information Technology and Art, Design and Architecture (**Figure 14**).

Figure 14 - Increased number of Indigenous Leadership roles

Employment Pathways

a) Indigenous Graduate Program

As part of the inaugural Indigenous Graduate Program launched in January 2023, ten Indigenous graduates (8 women; 2 men) were recruited. The Program involved the creation of ten bespoke positions in fields aligned with each person's professional career goals. This strength-based approach has been highly successful in diversifying pathways to Indigenous employment, and all ten roles were based in different organisational units.

The Program signals a high level of leadership commitment to developing diverse roles across a large organisational structure where the graduate cohort can thrive, grow and position themselves to effectively contribute positive impacts.

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[3] Due to system limitations, we were not able to report on methods of appointment (i.e. promotion vs recruitment)

b) Indigenous Traineeship Program

Between 2017-23, a total of 21 Indigenous trainees commenced our 2-year Indigenous Traineeship Program (**Table 4**). The average completion rate was 52.4% (11 trainees) and only 2 completions resulted in further (post-traineeship) employment at Monash. A review found that key challenges were in the apparent misalignment between career aspirations of trainees (typically Year 10-12 high school graduates) with the expectations of career pathways in the Higher Education Sector. From 2023, this initiative was paused and focus shifted to the more effective Indigenous Graduate Program.

Table 4 - Indigenous Traineeship commencements and completions

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
HC traineeship commencement	5	3	5	1	0 (Covid impact)	6	1	21
HC traineeship completion (2yrs)	2	3	2	1		3	-	11
Completion Rate	40%	100%	40%	100%	NA	50%	0%	52.4%

Recruitment data

We acknowledge that the number of Indigenous applicants has not necessarily increased in recent years, particularly when contrasted against 2018 or 2019 (pre-Covid), and recognise this area still requires further attention and represents a formal goal in the University's strategic documents.

However, the improvements Monash achieved in responding to Indigenous applications are presented in the increased shortlisting rates in 2022 and 2023 (January-June) (**Figure 15**).
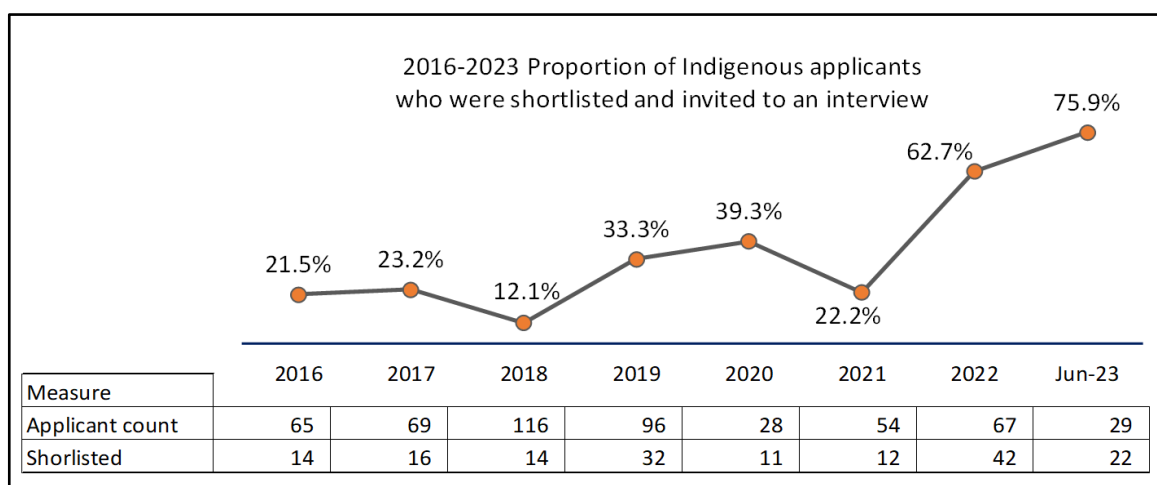
Figure 15 - Proportion of Indigenous applicants shortlisted for an interview (2016-2023)

From 2022, the new Indigenous Employment Policy and Procedure enabled us to commence advertising Indigenous-identified roles. This contributed notably to the improvements reported in **Figure 15**.

We therefore also examined shortlisting rates separately for identified roles and non-identified roles (**Figure 16 and Table 5**), which showed that shortlisting of candidates for non-identified roles improved, although less dramatically, reaching 55.6% in 2023 (this is where Indigenous candidates are competing with a broader talent pool).

We also came across examples where candidates, who applied for more than one role and accepted an offer, were then reported as 'not progressed to interview' for the other role/s.
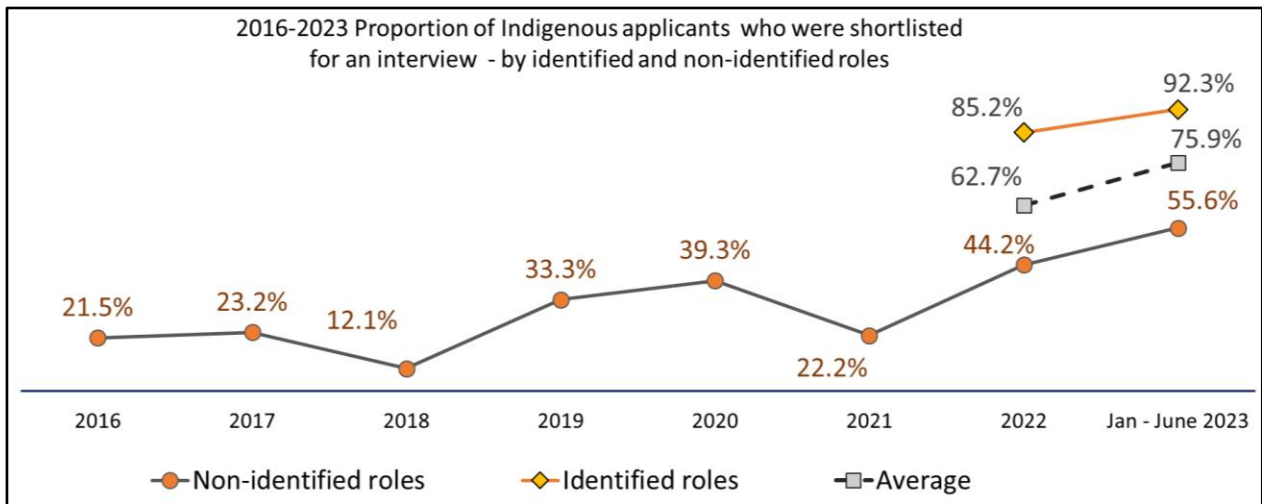
Figure 16 - Proportion of Indigenous job applicants shortlisted for an interview by identified and non-identified roles (2016-2023)

Table 5 - Applicant count and shortlisting rate for Indigenous-identified roles (2022-2023)

Measure	Year	Women	Men	GD/NB	No gender data	Total
APPLICANT COUNT	Jan-Dec 2022	16	7	2	2	27
	Jan-June 2023	7	5	0	1	13
INVITED TO INTEREVIEW / YARN	Jan-Dec 2022	14	5	2	2	23
	Jan-June 2023	7	4	0	1	12
SHORTLISTING RATE	Jan-Dec 2022	88%	71%	100%	100%	85%
	Jan-June 2023	100%	80%	NA	100%	92%
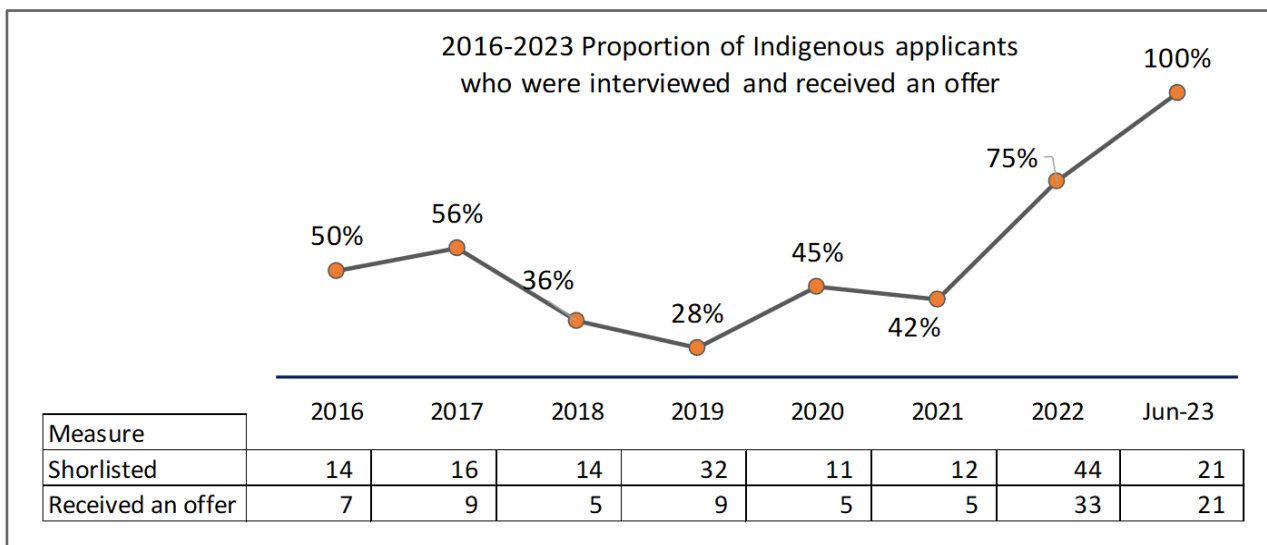
Figure 17 - Proportion of interviewed job applicants who received an offer of employment (2016-23)

Overall, Monash recorded a sharp increase in the number of new hires in the past two years as shown as offer data[4] in **Figure 15**, as well as the number of Indigenous employees described in **Figure 11**. This outcome, which manifested in staff data from 2022 onwards, was enabled by the combination of Indigenous-led initiatives and targeted interventions described in this application. In reflecting on our journey, this represents an unprecedented increase that speaks volumes to the commitments and changes the University instituted under Indigenous leadership.

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[4] Offers presented in this submission equate to appointments

IMPACT

Methodology

Figure 18 - Overview of steps taken to gather insights on impact from key stakeholder groups

We planned to conduct a survey and/or focus groups that would allow us to gain deeper insights into Indigenous new hires experiences. However, this posed the potential of further contributing to the cultural load of Indigenous staff at Monash, and overlapping with the intent of the "New Starters" survey administered routinely to all new hires at the conclusion of a recruitment process. Under the guidance of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Indigenous), the consensus was reached that interviews with key stakeholders would provide greater depth regarding the topic.

Summary of Impact

From the data-gathering activities outlined in **Figure 18**, the following four themes emerged as instrumental to the change that was achieved in Indigenous recruitment **(Figure 19)**.
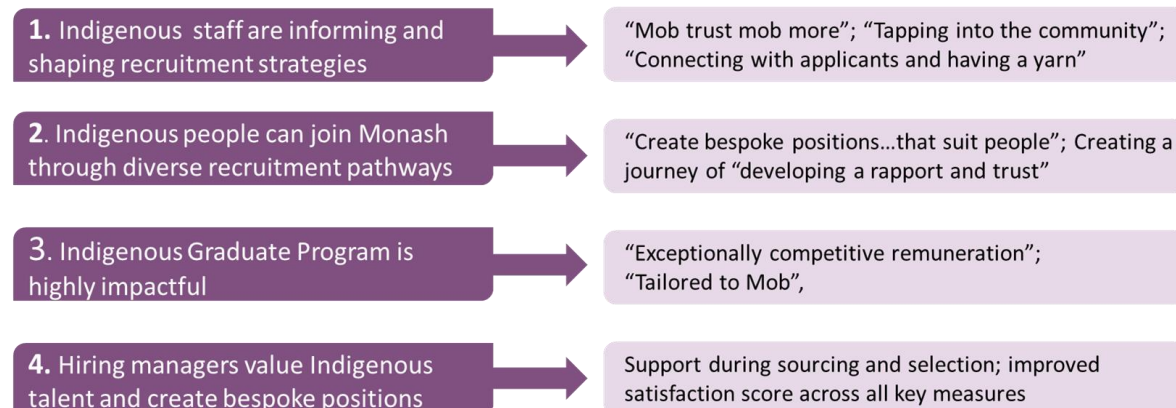

Figure 19 - Key themes where positive impact was identified

Table 6 - Indigenous staff are informing and shaping recruitment strategies

Theme 1: Indigenous staff are informing and shaping recruitment strategies	
Monash's Support for Indigenous HR roles - "Game Changer"	The support for the creation of Indigenous-identified roles in Monash HR was described by many as a true *"game changer"* and *"playing a large role in the improvements observed"*.
Importance of Indigenous-led - "Mob trust Mob more"	The importance of approaches being Indigenous-led was consistently highlighted as it helped with *"candidate care, trust, openness and honesty…and helped demystify what Monash is and what opportunities are available…relationship is everything"...* *"Mob trust Mob more, which is why it is important that we have Indigenous people in HR and recruitment".* Indigenous Employment and Engagement Manager, HR
Indigenous HR Roles are critical in decolonising processes	The Indigenous Employment team is spoke about *"tapping into community"* and *"making connections with candidates, decolonising the process and then reaching out to faculties to create positions"*. *"As a team all we do is focus on Indigenous recruitment and all the facets of it and it has exploded. We are so busy"*.
Unique Approach to Recruitment: culturally informed candidate care	*"In most cases recruitment teams are not able to talk to applicants due to the large numbers, rather they run the process from start to finish. In our team we are connecting with applicants and having a Yarn. If we get three applicants we aim to get three people jobs…We are making the connections and finding out what applicants want".* Indigenous Talent Partner, HR
New hires saw recruitment as culturally safe	*"It was a great pleasure to be interviewed in a culturally safe way which put me at ease and made me relax… It was a different way of operating an interview that I feel other people should adopt."* and *"Very satisfied with my recruitment experience, I found the process to be culturally appropriate and professional."* Indigenous staff members; via New Starter survey (2022/23)

" The bespoke and responsive initiatives being deployed across the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and HR at Monash are having tremendous impact on Indigenous employment. Our approach allows us to create positions, recruit future staff in ways that are appropriate, and progress Indigenous careers in new and exciting ways. In these ways, Monash is helping to build the future of Indigenous leadership in higher education. "

- Professor Tristan Kennedy, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

| Theme 2 – Effectiveness of the new Indigenous Employment Policy and Procedure	
Reaching Indigenous communities and niche advertising	The Indigenous HR team discussed the importance and effectiveness of advertising on Indigenous employment pages, such as Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Indigenous Employment Services. *"We also use our socials, we know how to share to ensure we reach our community".* The recruitment consultants at Monash also spoke highly of the effectiveness of "*greater engagement with specialised Indigenous recruitment agencies".*
Creation of Bespoke Positions	One of the main factors leading to improvements in Indigenous recruitment at Monash described by all stakeholders was the leadership support to remove employment caps for all Indigenous appointments and develop roles that match the strengths of candidates. Stakeholders commented: *"Removal of barriers now allowed the Indigenous HR team to do their job well"*, such as the ability to *"create bespoke positions, where the skills, expertise and interests of people are recognised and then Monash works with areas in the University to create and find roles that suit people."* Both hiring managers and the Indigenous HR team commented that this approach *"helps people thrive, develop and be challenged. Allowing people to contribute something meaningful… it works really well".*
Creating a Journey	Prospective applicants (professionals and academics) *"contact us and want to know more about working at Monash".* There is now greater focus on strength-based approaches: *"The recruitment process is a journey from when Indigenous people enquire to when opportunities are created and this is based on developing rapport and trust…and people experience success, development and opportunities throughout the journey."* Indigenous Talent Partner, HR The Interim Chief HR Officer also commented how the Indigenous HR team has been instrumental in educating staff at Monash, such as hiring managers and interview panel members, regarding how positions can be created to match the candidates' experience and interest. This is essentially *"allowing Indigenous applicants to make their own pathways".* Interviews with recruitment professionals echoed the sentiment that *"Monash being open to doing new things and things differently."*
New Starters report higher satisfaction with the recruitment process (Figure 20)	Data extracted from the "New Starters" survey show improvements achieved between 2019-2021 and 2022-2023 (pre and post implementation of key initiatives) for Indigenous new starters. Whereas their experiences were previously below the average Net Satisfaction Score of non-Indigenous new hires, this trend is now reversed, speaking to the level of candidate care that Indigenous new hires are able to receive.
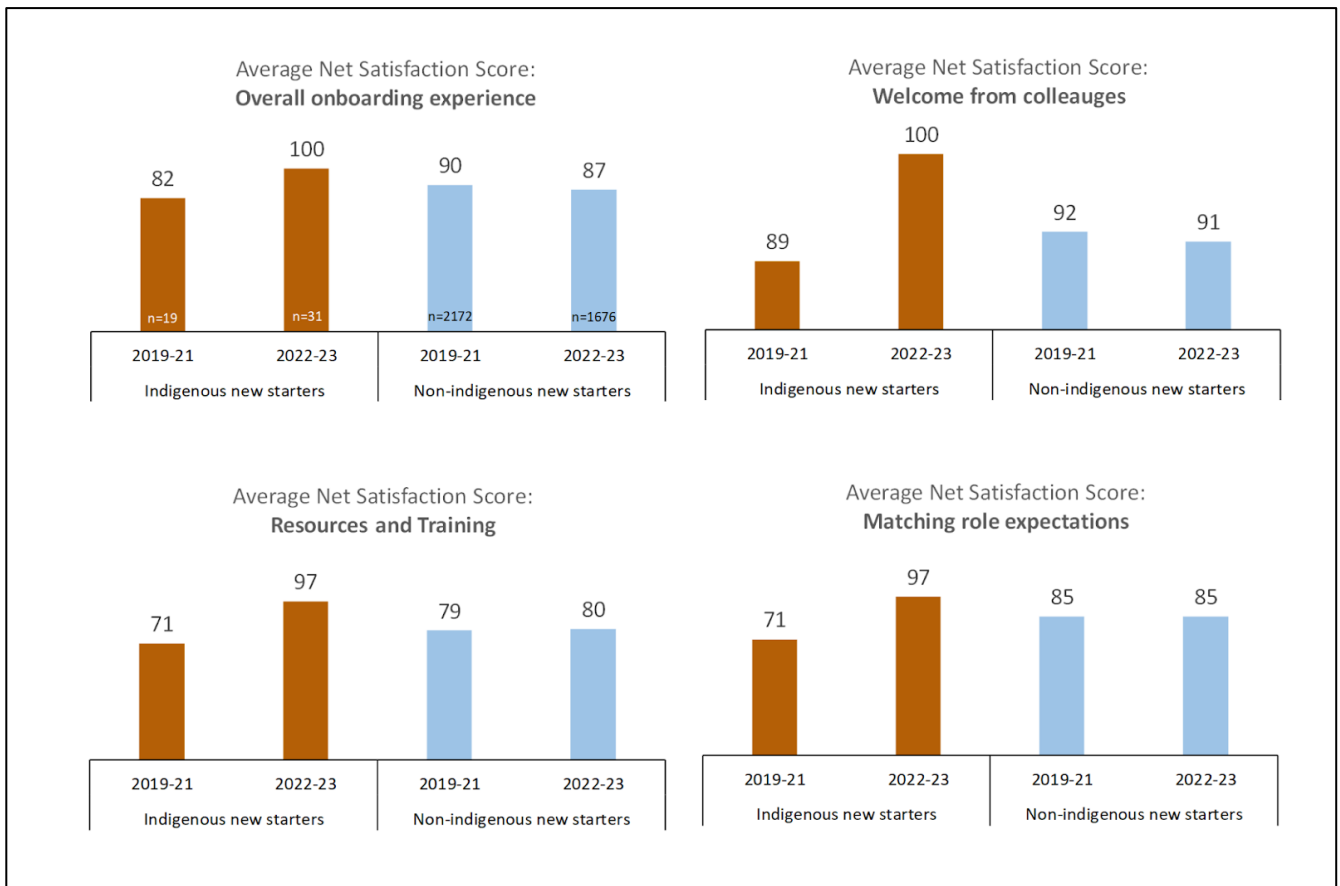
Figure 20 - Results from new starters survey (2019-2023)

Table 8 - Effectiveness of new pathways to employment

Theme 3 – Effectiveness of new pathways to employment	
Indigenous Graduate Program supports the development of future Indigenous leaders	From all stakeholder groups, feedback on the effectiveness of Monash's Indigenous Graduate Program (IGP) has been very positive, recognising it as an important recruitment pathway that supports the development of future Indigenous leaders. Feedback from graduates on the international component of the program (an opportunity to visit Monash's campus in Italy) was unanimously positive. This international exposure has been described by participants as a key differentiator in a competitive marketplace for Indigenous talent, along with an *"exceptionally competitive remuneration package for a graduate role".*
Indigenous Graduate Program (IGP) is fit for purpose	Program participants also acknowledged the close alignment of their roles with their career aspirations: *"Prior to joining the Indigenous Graduate Program, what interested me the most was the opportunity to work with Monash's senior executives. Given my recent academic background in international business and business management, working with the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice-President, and Director, Business Strategy would complement my majors and enable me to enhance my expertise in these fields."* 2023 IGP participant; Wiradjuri man

Graduates valued Indigenous-specific program	Feedback from graduates further highlighted how much they valued the fact the program was specifically developed for Indigenous participants as opposed to 'encouraging them to apply': *"This Monash program stood out to me against other grad programs I'd looked at in the past because it was an Indigenous grad program. I'd seen plenty of grad programs that encouraged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply, but never a program that was specifically tailored to Mob with such broad opportunities. The transition from being a student to a young professional has been quite daunting, so being in the same stage of development as a group of Mob makes me feel supported and secure."* 2023 IGP participant; woman
Traineeship program was not fit for purpose	Stakeholders involved in administering and overseeing the Indigenous traineeship program shared that while the traineeship provided good entry level positions for Year 10 to 12 high school graduates, this often led to disengagement as *"it was not the right fit for people".* A common reflection was that the higher education sector did not match their long-term career interests. All stakeholders agreed that pausing the program was seen as the right decision.

Table 9 - Improved recruitment experience reported by hiring managers

Theme 4 – Improved recruitment experience reported by hiring managers	
Hiring managers felt better supported by the Indigenous employment team (Figure 21)	We analysed responses from the "Hiring Manager Survey" administered routinely by the Recruitment team in HR. To assess change over time, we examined responses across two periods that represent 'before' and 'after' implementation of stated initiatives. We also compared responses among managers who hired Indigenous and non-Indigenous talent. Improvements between the time periods were observed in the recruitment support of Indigenous candidates, including support in the selection process, advertising/sourcing and the commitment to success. In contrast, this was not necessarily the experience of hiring managers of non-Indigenous candidates.

> " My experience of hiring an Indigenous candidate was definitely better because of the support I received from the Indigenous person in HR. Through a more conversational style free flowing interview I got to learn about the candidate's strengths and what opportunities they were looking for. I was then able to tailor the position description accordingly, to reflect their experience and interests, knowing that they will be able to make excellent contributions and thrive in the role."
>
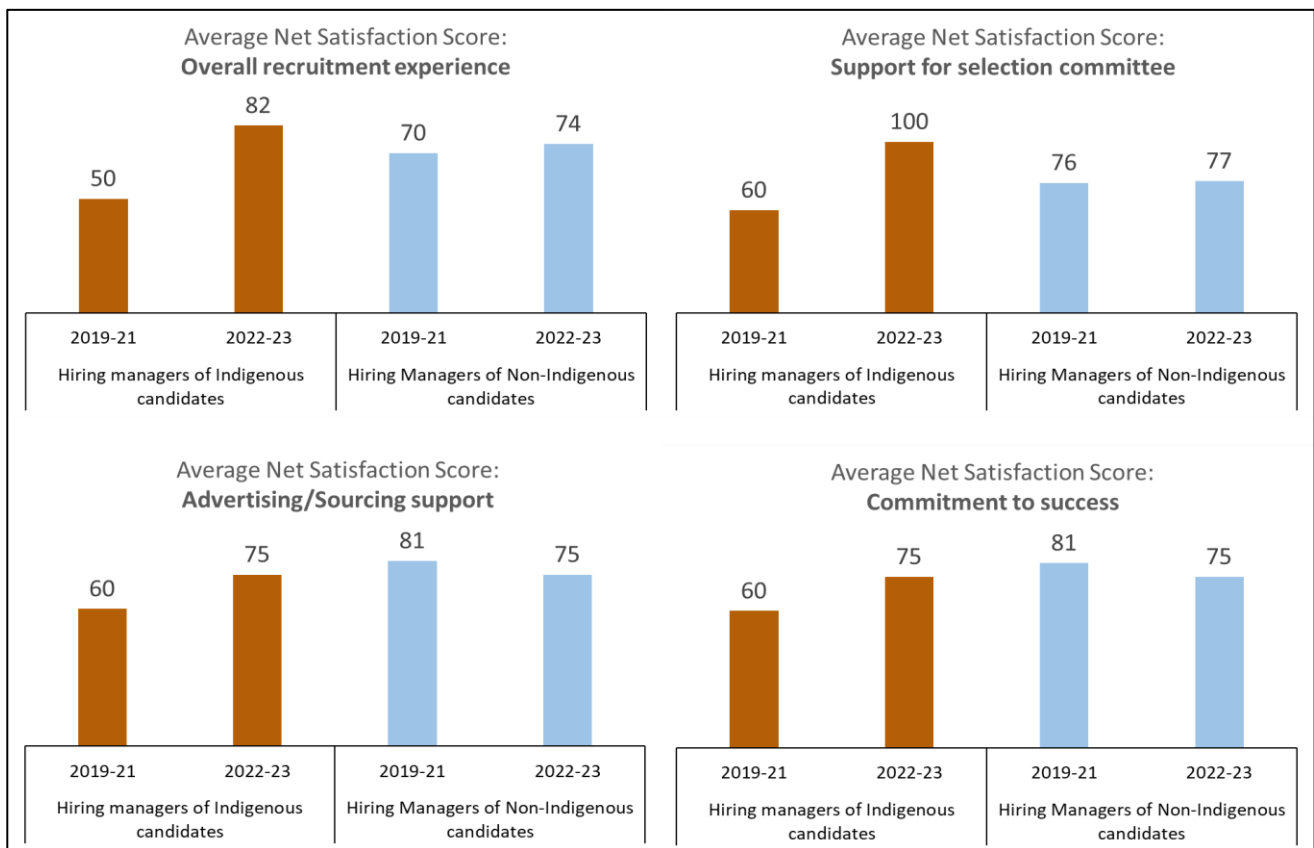> **- Hiring Manager of Indigenous Talent in 2023**

Figure 21 - Results from HR survey to hiring managers (2019-2023)

In gathering data for impact, several persisting gaps and further opportunities were also identified. They represent honest reflections and acknowle7dgments that we are on a journey and more needs to be done. Summary of these findings is presented in **Table 10** and have been used to inform the Action Plan.

Table 10 - Summary of gaps and further opportunities

Persisting Gaps and Further Opportunities
1) Continued education and knowledge building
The feedback from recruitment staff highlighted a need for *"continued learning across the university in relation to placing Indigenous academics in all academic areas"*. Support from leaders has generated a strong momentum for change but *"more needs to be done in educating Hiring Managers and managers in general that Indigenous Employment is an ongoing uplift project."* There is also an opportunity to mandate cultural safety training for all recruitment staff.
2) Retention is paramount
It was highlighted by different stakeholder groups that while recruitment has been improving, retention of Indigenous staff needs to remain at the forefront of our efforts. *"Supporting and strengthening Indigenous leadership and career advancement"* and *"improving networking and professional development of Indigenous staff is something Monash still needed to work on and was the next focus."* One of the next steps identified by our stakeholder groups was the development of Indigenous staff retention strategy and mirroring the investments the University put into Indigenous recruitment.

3) Improving candidate experience

Indigenous candidates completing the New Starter Survey raised issues with the application form, noting it was somewhat *'clunky and repetitive'*. They also commented they were not receiving automated confirmation of their offer acceptance and were not sure if their acceptance was received.

4) Ongoing positioning of Monash as an employer of choice for First Nations Peoples

The number of applications from Indigenous peoples has not improved in the past few years, thus further efforts are needed to communicate and position Monash as an employer of choice for First Nations Peoples. This was echoed by most recruitment consultants at Monash: *"As a function, recruitment needs to have far greater support from marketing and communication and this includes in employer branding around Indigenous recruitment."*

> " I recommend that we look at the way work is designed and what meaningful ways we can create opportunities within Faculty and across the university. I also think that we can share candidate experience videos or in person testaments at townhalls to show the impact its having across the universities.
>
> It would also help to have a work fair hosted by the William Cooper Institute to promote job opening etc across the university or an insight into what its like to work at Monash and invite members of our community inside Monash. "
>
> **- Recruitment consultant**

FINAL REFLECTIONS

While this application highlights progress and some success, we recognise we have a way to go to reach population parity and before we can say with confidence that we are fully drawing on the abilities, knowledge and leadership of Indigenous staff. With strong Indigenous leadership and guidance, we will continue to address the systemic barriers embedded within our structures and the sector broadly. Monash will continue to improve Indigenous participation in our workforce and celebrate and prioritise Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

FURTHER ACTIONS

Ref. No.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person / Team responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Success Indicators
1.	It became apparent in the process of preparing this Cygnet application, that there is currently a lack of cultural training for HR staff	Provide HR staff with cultural training workshop provided by William Cooper Institute; ensure completion by all recruitment consultants	2024	Monash Human Resources Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Monash Human Resources Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Completion rate of cultural training by William Cooper Institute Training feedback demonstrates value Shortlisting rates of Indigenous applicants continue to increase
2.	Hiring managers, Chairs of selection Panels and other panel members are expected to undertake a training module on "Staff Selection". This content does not currently include cultural awareness content.	Embed cultural awareness content into existing compulsory training for Chairs and members of selection panels.	2024	Monash Human Resources, Talent Engagement Development	Monash Human Resources Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Revised training module is launched and promoted; Feedback indicates positive value in improving cultural awareness among hiring managers
3.	Lack of formal acknowledgement of cultural load for Indigenous staff at Monash.	Establish a cross-portfolio project group, led by PVC (Indigenous), to develop guidelines for recognising cultural workload borne by Indigenous people in the workplace.	2024	PVCI, Monash Human Resources, Office of the Provost	Vice Chancellors Group PVCI	All Indigenous staff at Monash have cultural load recognised in workload models Indigenous cultural workload is understood by promotion panels at Monash Improved retention and promotion of Indigenous staff.
4.	Our data analysis of applications revealed that application numbers from Indigenous candidates have not matched previous years.	Develop initiatives and campaigns that help improve Monash University's reputation as an employer of choice for First Nations people.	2024	University Marketing and Communications team	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) / William Cooper Institute	Sponsorship of external Indigenous community events and forums Indigenous leaders at Monash are profiled externally through relevant media channels. Improved application count by Indigenous candidates
5.	Retention of Indigenous staff is a key area of focus to support progress towards the University's Indigenous Employment goals	Develop Indigenous Retention Plan, to support long-term success of Indigenous peoples at Monash, including development strategies, leadership advancement and staff networking.	2024	Monash Human Resources in partnership with Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)	Monash Human Resources	Indigenous Retention Plan is launched, promoted and implemented; Retention of Indigenous staff improves in line with University-wide average