

# Unlocking Capacity and Empowering Choices: Indigenous Students' Aspirations for Higher Education

1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016

Ms Le Hoang Le, University of Newcastle

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Modifications: Changed to meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.  
Alternate text inserted for all images. Minor typographical errors corrected.

# Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

## 2015 National Priorities Pool FINAL REPORT

Unlocking Capacity and Empowering Choices: Indigenous Students' Aspirations for Higher Education

1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016

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In accordance with the Conditions of Grant, you must submit to the Department a Final Report (Clause 6.1 of Part A) and an Acquittal Report (clause 6.4 of Part A).

To meet this obligation, please submit:

- the completed **Final Report** template, in Word and PDF
- the completed and signed **Declaration** form, in PDF
- the completed **Acquittal Report** template, in Excel and PDF.

All documents must be submitted to [equity@education.gov.au](mailto:equity@education.gov.au) by **31 January 2017**. If you require additional guidance or clarification, please contact us at [equity@education.gov.au](mailto:equity@education.gov.au).

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# 1. PROJECT SUMMARY (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2(a)-(e) of Part A)

## Objectives

Indicate the extent to which the Project Objectives specified in clause 3 of Part A of the Conditions of Grant were met. Where obligations established in the Conditions of Grant were not met, please identify these and provide an explanation of circumstances and consequences.

**Table 1: Project objectives**

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
Explore the educational intentions and occupational interests of Indigenous school students from Years 3–12.	Objective met
Explore the enablers and barriers to achieving their aspirations recognised by Indigenous students, their parents and their teachers.	Objective met
Explore the understanding Indigenous students convey about the path from school to higher education.	Objective met

## Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

Below, please specify whether:

- all project Activities specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were completed
- all Project Milestones specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were completed
- all Key Performance Indicators specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were met.

Where obligations established in the Conditions of Grant were not met, identify these and provide an explanation of circumstances and consequences.

**Table 2: Project activities, milestones and KPIs**

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
31 Jan 2016	1. Establishment of project team	Completed	Project manager and research assistants contracted	Completed
31 Mar 2016	2. Application for appropriate ethics approvals	Completed (August 2016). Delayed due to	Appropriate ethics approval applications submitted to the	Completed

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
		the ill-health of the Project Manager	University of Newcastle and the NSW Department of Education and Communities	
30 Jun 2016	3.1 Scoping review of literature and reports relating to Indigenous student aspirations and the enablers and barriers to their higher education access, retention and completion	Completed	Scoping review of relevant Australian literature and reports for the period 2001-2015 is completed	Completed
	3.2 Analysis of extant quantitative data on the specific educational and occupational interests of approximately 369 Indigenous students across all primary and high school years (Years 3-12) from the Aspirations Longitudinal Study	Completed	Extant quantitative data is analysed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• test for patterns in the array of Indigenous student aspirations as they intersect with SES, gender, location and prior achievement</li> <li>• compare results with data from non-Indigenous students, and;</li> <li>• explore whether there are times in schooling at which interventions might be most productive</li> </ul>	Completed
	3.3 Analysis of extant qualitative data from open-ended survey responses and focus groups on the specific educational and occupational interests of up to 369 Indigenous students across all primary and high school years (Years 3-12) from the Aspirations Longitudinal Study	Completed	Extant qualitative data is coded and analysed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examine the reasons students provide for their occupational choices and educational plans, and;</li> <li>• elaborate any patterns identified in the quantitative data</li> </ul>	Completed
	3.5 Establishment of a schedule for extended interviews with a sample of Indigenous students participating in the Aspirations Longitudinal Study, plus their parents/ carers and teachers	Completed	A schedule is established for extended interviews with a sample of Indigenous students, plus their parents/ carers and teachers, at approximately 12 NSW schools	Completed
31 Aug 2016	4. Completion of extended interviews	Completed (November	Extended interviews are conducted with a sample of	Completed

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
	with a sample of Indigenous students participating in the Aspirations Longitudinal Study, plus their parents/ carers and teachers	2016). Delayed due to the ill-health of the Project Manager	Indigenous students, plus their parents/carers and teachers, at approximately 12 NSW schools to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student motivations, hopes and desires as they relate to aspirations for higher education or not</li> <li>• enablers and barriers to higher education participation, and;</li> <li>• the understanding conveyed by students and parents/carers of the path from school to higher education</li> </ul>	
31 Oct 2016	5. Analysis of extended interview data	Completed (December 2016). Delayed due to the ill-health of the Project Manager.	Extended interview data is coded and analysed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significant themes</li> <li>• links to themes identified in the scoping review of literature and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from the Aspirations Longitudinal Study</li> </ul>	Completed
30 Nov 2016	6. Draft Project Report	Completed (December 2016)	Draft Project Report is completed	Completed
31 Dec 2016	7. Submission of Final Report	Completed	Project Report is submitted to the Department following review and finalisation by the Project Team	Completed

## Highlights and Issues

*Provide a summary of highlights and achievements arising from your project (maximum half page)*

The project involved the analysis of the educational and career aspirations of Indigenous students, and reasons for those aspirations, drawing on more than 10,000 surveys completed by school students (342 of whom were Indigenous) and focus groups involving 553 of these students (35 of whom were Indigenous). Additional interviews were conducted with 31 Aboriginal students, 14 of their parents, and 17 teachers of these students. Regression analyses and qualitative analyses have created a rich picture of the barriers and enablers to higher education participation for Indigenous students that will be available to inform outreach and other strategic activities involving schools that are undertaken by universities.

Two research journal articles are under review and a further two research journal articles are in preparation for submission to national and international journals by July 2017. These include: *Widening participation and the aspirations of Australian Indigenous school students: On the possibility and desirability of Higher Education* (under review); *The participation of Australian Indigenous students in Higher Education: A scoping review of the literature, 2000-2016* (under review); *The pathway to Higher Education: Understanding barriers and enablers to accessing University for Australian Indigenous school students* (in preparation), and; *Influences on the post-secondary aspirations of Australian Indigenous school students* (in preparation).

A conference presentation was delivered at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, Melbourne, December 2016. A poster based on preliminary findings was included in a showcase of research at the University of Newcastle (September, 2016) and a paper on the aspirations of Indigenous students in Australia has been accepted for presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, April 2017.

*Did the project lead to implementable outcomes? What changes will result at your institution/nationally? How is research being translated into practice? Are there activities resulting from this project that will be continued?*

Through dissemination of project findings, we anticipate that university equity units and Aboriginal support units will be interested in working with our team (including its Indigenous members) to consider implications and activities that might be implemented to address enduring differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in terms of aspirations for university.

*Did you undertake an evaluation of your project?*

Yes  No

*Please summarise the findings and attach the evaluation report.*

*Where applicable, indicate number of the following resulting from this project:*

<b>Student contacts</b>	31
<b>Journal (or other publication) submissions</b>	4
<b>Conference Presentations</b>	3
<b>Websites developed</b>	N/A
<b>Educational or marketing campaigns</b>	N/A
<b>Community organisations engaged</b>	N/A
<b>Schools engaged</b>	8
<b>Parental/family contacts</b>	14

*Optional - If you included transformational/behavioural change KPIs in your EOI please summarise outcomes here:*

*Describe any issues that occurred during the year and any mitigation strategies you implemented.*

## 2. OTHER PROJECT MATERIAL (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 (b)-(e) of Part A)

*List the titles of any published reports, pamphlets or other documentation produced in the course of the Project and attach them to this Final Report.*

**Table 3: Additional materials produced over the course of the project**

TYPE	AUTHOR	DATE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION DETAILS
N/A			



### 3. ACQUITTAL REPORT (Conditions of Grant, clause 6.4(e), clause 6.7-8 of Part A)

*Have you fully expended the Grant Funds provided under the Conditions of Grant?*

Yes  No

*If the answer is No, please specify:*

- *the amount of funds remaining: \$*
- *the reason for this underspend:*

*Ensure that the completed Acquittal Report template is signed by an appropriate university officer and attached to this Final Report.*

*\*IMPORTANT NOTICE - Unspent 2015 National Priorities Pool Grant Funds*

- *Grant recipients must fully expend these 2015 National Priorities Pool funds in the project period for which the grant is made and report on this expenditure to the Commonwealth, including the amount of any unspent funds.*
- *If a provider fails to spend the full amount granted it in respect of a year, the unspent funds may be recovered by the Commonwealth.*

# DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I am authorised by the university to sign this Declaration on its behalf, and
- to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided in the **Final Report** and **Acquittal Report** for the HEPPP 2015 National Priorities Pool project *Unlocking Capacity and Empowering Choices: Indigenous Students' Aspirations for Higher Education* is true, correct and accurate in all particulars.

I understand that:

- The provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- If any actual or potential conflict of interest arises, I must notify the Commonwealth immediately in writing of the facts giving rise to the actual or potential conflict of interest and to take such steps as the Commonwealth may require so as to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest that may arise.

I agree to publication of the Final Report on the Department of Education and Training website, once accepted by the department.

<b>Title</b>	Professor
<b>Name</b>	Liz Burd
<b>Position</b>	Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
<b>Signature</b>	