



## 2025-2026 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

### Purpose

**This compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the University. Entering into a Compact is one of the quality and accountability requirements, which a higher education provider must meet under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)* as a condition of receiving a grant. Specifically, subsection 19-110(1) of HESA requires that Table A and Table B providers must, in respect of each year for which a grant is paid to the provider under HESA, enter into a Mission -Based Compact with the Commonwealth for a period that includes that year.**

**All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.**

## Mission and Strategic Planning

As a specialist institute and the only Indigenous Australians dual sector tertiary education provider in Australia, Batchelor Institute serves a unique role in providing education, training programs and courses for Indigenous Australians. Council determines our vision as being the education provider of choice for Indigenous Australians people. The Institute is guided by the Strategic Plan 2025-2027, its Teaching and Learning and Research Plans.

In line with our strategic direction, we are working with TEQSA to recommence the delivery of undergraduate degree course. We are confident that we will be prepared to deliver a high-quality undergraduate course commencing in 2027, should our application for re-registration be approved.

Also, in line with our strategic direction we are working on the delivery of new Graduate Certificate courses and aim to have these offered in semester two 2026. Part of the preparation of these courses will involve seeking input from the industries such as the public sector, Indigenous organisations, community organisations, the defence force, the banking industry, the mining industry and national sporting bodies.

One of our aims of these courses is to ensure that Indigenous people in the workforce can develop their skills and qualifications in a culturally safe place learning environment. In a short period of time, we believe that Indigenous people from all over Australia will enrol in these courses and these courses will provide direct benefit to their career prospects.

### *Measures of success*

The primary measures of success in our Institution reflect Indigenous Australians expectations of an Australian Higher Education system which is underpinned by Indigenous Australians led and Indigenous Knowledge driven approaches, responses, and measures of success. In taking that position we also differentiate ourselves because we come from and retain the connected cultural knowledge practices embedded in our Indigenous Australian languages, cultures, and countries.

Sector challenges that are addressed through our underpinning approach include:

- The Institute will be developing a plan in response to TEQSA's request that addresses AI as an issue that teaching staff will incorporate into their delivery.
- Academic integrity risks have been identified and addressed by recent Academic and Corporate Governance Review.

In relation to other sector risks:

- there is no casualisation risk, which is an issue across the wider higher education sector, within the Institute.
- changes to the international student market does not impact the Institute, which currently is not CRICOS registered and therefore has no international student delivery.
- our student load is relatively stable and therefore, the impact of fluctuating student load through attrition on the Institute's finances is not relevant.
- We have undergone IT right fit for risk compliance checks and expect to be signed off on milestone 3 by December 2025. Batchelor Institute as of 2024 is a member of CAUDIT and delegates attend regular cyber security briefings.
- We are in the process of appointing an E-Learning Coordinator, specialising in instructional design, to support the development of a high-quality learning and teaching platform for our students, that will support individual LLND requirements and accessibility needs of the student.

## Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Batchelor Institute's main constituency originates from remote or very remote Northern Territory communities. However, our Graduate School attracts candidates from around the country. The reason for our existence is to provide learning opportunities for those who have historically faced many barriers to education. Distance and literacy are two of the major barriers.

The Institute is responding to issue of distance by provision of a mixed mode of learning and a strong Away from Base (AFB) residential and reverse block model of delivery. Masterclasses are held twice a year, with Candidates encouraged and supported to attend in person where possible. Masterclasses help to reduce isolation of Candidates and assists in building professional networks.

We are currently working to recommence delivery of undergraduate degree courses from 2027, which will provide greater opportunity for our student cohorts to undertake culturally appropriate education.

As a dual sector institution, we have introduced a student-focused multiple entry and exit system ensuring every touchpoint on the learning journey delivers clear, recognised value. Learners can join at different stages, pause, re-enter, or exit with portable credentials that support employment, further study, and community leadership. Every exit is designed to be a positive outcome.

Our teaching and learning philosophy is our both-ways ways approach. This approach allows Indigenous students to use their cultures, histories, experiences and perspectives in their learning. This means that these are included in all coursework, readings, assessments, lectures and tutorial discussions. This allows Indigenous students to develop their skills and confidence by using their own strengths. All higher education teaching staff are either Indigenous or are well versed in Indigenous people and perspectives. This ensures that our two-ways approach is being used to develop students. One important aspect of our two-way philosophy is ensuring that western academic concepts are equally embedded in our courses and delivery.

One approach that is crucial to ensuring equal opportunity is to ensure that all our graduate certificate courses have Commonwealth Supported Places for Indigenous students. All students being Indigenous and come from historically social and economic disadvantaged backgrounds. Commonwealth Supported Places will provide these students with the economic desire to commit to studies and complete their studies. The benefit to this will be massive for Australia and the Australian Government's commitment to closing the gap. The graduates of our graduate certificate courses will be better qualified and skilled to contribute to closing the gap and to ensuring that Indigenous people are beginning to be represented in higher levels in all major industries.

The inclusion of a Graduate School Candidate Liaison Officer funded entirely out of our ISSP allocation means that HDR students and candidates have representation on committees and a champion and advocate and first port-of-call support. Communication is key to the attraction and retention of students, many of whom speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language in their home community and in their workplace. Interpretation and communication skills are particularly relevant to the role of the Candidate Liaison Officer.

## Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

We pride ourselves on being an exclusively culturally safe and accessible environment for Indigenous Australians scholars, Elders and academics. The inclusion of face-to-face learning, peer and cultural activities underpin how we deliver on this.

To strengthen the pathway into higher education and to meet the current gap in provision, we are in the process of acquiring self-accreditation to provide AQF levels 5 to 7 once again. This will enable a more seamless and coherent educational experience for Indigenous Australians students and provide an educational bridge between the current VET and higher education operations (harmonisation).

We are establishing a high-level whole of institute committee that is committed to ensuring student success. This committee will consist of staff from the following internal areas:

- Deputy Chief Executive Officer Academic
- Dean, higher education and research division (chair)
- Director of Vocational Education and Training
- Director of Student Support
- Director of Library and Information Services
- Director of Information and Communication Technology

This committee will begin meeting early in the first semester to understand and develop strategies to overcome students are having with their studies. This will provide short and long-term strategies that will enable us to be proactive in addressing issues and assisting students.

All our units will have student evaluations. These will be opportunities for us to incorporate positive and negative feedback into our teaching and learning approaches.

### *Learning and Teaching Plan*

Our Teaching and Learning plan will allow us to provide a more focused and responsive engagement with students with the aim that access to culturally safe communication processes remains a constant throughout their student experience. Communication is concerned with candidates' needs in respect to navigating the Institute's systems, enabling access, and increasing the efficiency of our response with students to ensure that channels of communication are effective and responsive. This practice allows us to maintain accurate and culturally responsive decision making and record those processes as part of the Indigenous Australians Governance commitment of the Institute.

## Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

The Institute's Higher Education and Research Division (HERD) quality and strength have grown in recent years and continue to grow. Batchelor Institute's researchers have a strong publication record, providing valuable evidence for communities, governments, researchers and community-based organisations.

Work is underway to evolving our ethics advisory committee to a NHMRC registered ethics committee to best support our researchers and research candidates.

The research program has steadily increased its capacity to conduct national and Territory-wide research and evaluation projects. The focus has been on providing opportunities to engage with Indigenous people and communities to explore and find solutions to problems identified by communities, consistent with the Institute's strategic directions.

The design and offering of the Research Training Program both online and in face-to-face peer, and supervisory delivery is core to the record of candidate success through our attuned cultural program.

The program is augmented by a network of Indigenous Australians academics from around the nation who support our hybrid learning with online and face to face participation at Masterclasses, and through being delegated to panels for Supervision and for Confirmation of Candidature milestones. The process is vibrant, but there is risk associated with deep reliance on external specialists and so our planning for the program will concentrate on widening sources of research learning and opportunity for Candidates to develop through Industry (internships or placements), International Indigenous academic participation in supervision, and through encouraging Candidates to grow their own professional networks.

Key research priorities in the coming year are to build on recent significant projects with a focus on demand driven social action research, succession planning for the next generation of researchers, and strengthening language maintenance and revival. This will be measured by new grant income, including from category 1 funding (e.g. ARC), growth of teams of trained and experienced Indigenous community-based researchers, and additional languages undergoing revival.

Batchelor Institute has a Graduate School that currently has sixteen PhD candidates and five masters candidates. This is one of the highest numbers of Indigenous higher degree by research enrolments in Australia.

The Graduate School exists to provide a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to speak their truths, through the provision of a high-quality Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Program, intensive student support and the creation of a research community of practice. It operates on our two-way philosophy which involves developing Indigenous research students to be experts in working with Indigenous research participants and Indigenous communities.

Our approach allows research students to understand research from the perspectives of Indigenous people and communities, to understand the challenges in Indigenous research and to be better prepared to collaborate with Indigenous people. We do this through supervision and workshops. Our intensive workshops provide a range of topics and expertise.

We expect enrolments in our Graduate School programs to continue increasing by at least 2 new candidates per year. We expect 3-4 completions every 2 years, knowing these numbers will change as the increased cohort progresses.

## Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Batchelor has extensive links with industry, and these will be strengthened during 2025 and 2026. These industries will include the public sector, Indigenous organisations, community organisations, the defence force, the banking industry, the mining industry and national sporting bodies.

The purpose of these consultations is to ensure that all major industries that employ Indigenous people, work with and deliver services to Indigenous people have input into these courses, so that our courses are best serving these industries, their Indigenous employees and the Indigenous communities they work with and provide services to.

We are currently expanding our education portfolio through the introduction of new short courses, enabling programs, undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, and a strengthened Graduate School.

One of our aims of these courses is to ensure that Indigenous people in the workforce can develop their skills and qualifications in a culturally safe place learning environment. In a short period of time, we believe that Indigenous people from all over Australia will enrol in these courses and these courses will provide direct benefit to their career prospects.

Batchelor Institute is currently partnered with University of Tasmania and University of the Sunshine Coast under two ARC grants, one Linkage and one Discovery. Both contain scholarships for HDR students.

Through the research and evaluation projects underway or recently completed, Batchelor Institute has partnerships with University of South Australia, Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Curtin University, University of Notre Dame Australia, Federation University, ANU and Deakin University, in addition to five Aboriginal community organisations, and 12 non-government and government partners.

MOU's and Project advisory boards provide a formal means of linking industry and stakeholders with the shared governance of research and evaluation projects. This is another way that Batchelor Institute ensures our broad and equitable industry links are operating well and that community accountability as well as accountability to funding sources can be managed and met appropriately and retained for life of project towards sustainable impacts.

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

**Jessica Mohr**

Full name (please print)

**First Assistant Secretary**

Position

of the Department of Education

Signature

01/12/2025

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
BATCHELOR INSTITUTE OF INDIGENOUS  
TERTIARY EDUCATION

by

**RENEE LONG**

Full name (please print)

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Date : 12/11/2025

Signature

In the presence of:

**Rachel Searl**

Witness (please print)

**Executive Officer**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

**DAVID CUSACK**

Witness (please print)

**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature