Cultural Safety Participant Alumni event

Time: 3:00-4:00pm
Date: Wednesday 15 November, 2017
Place: Bradley Forum
• Good afternoon.

• and welcome to UniSA’s newest alumni chapter, graduates of the Cultural Safety Training program.

• This began three years ago when members of SMG were introduced to the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

• Not many of us managed to leave the room without tears running down our faces.

• I think it taught us that while history written in books and made into films is generally pretty awesome, actual lived history and the vocalisation of real experience can also be pretty horrifying.

• And so it was for the people who were privy to Haydn Bromley’s stories of his people, both real and remembered.
• I decided then that part of our reconciliation process at UniSA would be to open up these lectures to as many people as possible.

• In the past 3 years almost 1000 staff members have answered the call.

• And so the purpose of creating a cultural safety training alumni group is to push your influence through the rest of our staff.

• Through your influence we can build support for our reconciliation initiatives such as the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan and Racism It Stops With Me.

• Some of you would be familiar with our original Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan which we launched in 2014.

• We have completed a lot of the actions outlined in our Innovate RAP
We launched RAP to the university with community guests, including the Council of Elders;
we now have acknowledgement of Country on each of our campuses;
there are major Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artwork prominently displayed in the Jeffrey Smart Building;
we celebrate National Reconciliation Week every year;
we have evaluated and continue to fund the Aboriginal Graduate Program;
our 2% Aboriginal employment target was approved by SMG and an Aboriginal Employment Strategy was developed to outline strategy for reaching the target.

- Ongoing activities promised in our Innovate RAP continue:
  - guidelines on the use of Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country;
o we’ve commissioned new processional music for graduations, written by Yorta Yorta woman, soprano, composer and educator, Deborah Cheetham;
o Coolamons and message sticks will also be carried in that procession;
o a short publication on Kaurna, Boandik and Barngarla peoples has been discussed and designed with key Aboriginal stakeholders to be distributed at key locations;
o we’ve increased the prominence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and related issues on the corporate website; and
o the cultural awareness training that you have all completed has been, and will continue to be, delivered to staff members
o and there’s an additional half-day workshop on working with Aboriginal Peoples that has been developed and provided to staff.
• The stretch RAP, which is part of Universities Australia’s Indigenous Strategy, focuses on increasing Aboriginal involvement and attainment in higher education.

• Some of the actions that we’ll undertake to make that happen include:
  
  o making Aboriginal education, research and employment priority areas in our core policy and business plan documents;
  
  o having Aboriginal Research Strategies in place by next year;
  
  o having processes that ensure all student will encounter and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content as integral parts of their course of study; and
  
  o having staff complete cross-cultural training programs.
• That’s where you come in as a kind of steering group to spread the message of how important this cultural awareness training is.

• Our focus is to become the University of Choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

• Our moves towards this have included the creation of the role of Pro Vice Chancellor for Aboriginal Leadership and Strategy –

• you all know Professor Irene Watson -

• Our partnership in initiatives such as the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience,

• And providing culturally appropriate supports such as Wirringka student services.

• Many of our plans are still incomplete, among them:
  o expanding the reach of cultural awareness/capability programs for students;
  o naming appropriate spaces for Aboriginal Elders;
• forming a Council of Elders for the three public South Australian universities;
• identifying and engaging more often with Aboriginal professional organisations; and
• increasing our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni.

• And for these last incomplete plans and for future activities, such as

  • absorbing the messages of Racism. It Stops With Me and putting a stop to racism whenever you see or hear it; or

  • getting involved in NAIDOC Week which is a great celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements

• we look to people like you who have already absorbed the lessons that Haydyn Bromley, Deanne Hanchant-Nichols and their colleagues have shared.
• You are in a great position to lead UniSA’s charge to become the university of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

• And because you have been given special insight the historical struggles of Aboriginal people,

• I hope I can safely add that Racism Stops With You.

• Thank you.