Acknowledgment of Country

Victoria University (VU) acknowledges the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) and Wathaurung (Wadawurrung) 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. As we share our own knowledge practices within the University may we pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community and their ownership of Country. We acknowledge that the land on which our campuses stand is the place 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.

Warning to Indigenous Australians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons.

Cover Image

Mural at Victoria University Footscray Nicholson Campus

Artist  Heesco
Title  Ms Citizen of the World

Dressed in centuries old traditional Mongolian dress along with modern fashion accessories, holding a smart phone. Symbolising old and new cultures of our ever changing world. Winner of the inaugural Footscray Art Prize in 2017.
Victoria University is the University of Opportunity and Success. We are an open and inclusive University, without boundaries. We have a clear vision — to create exceptional value for any student from any background and uplift the communities in which we operate.

A hallmark of VU is the cultural diversity that permeates within our institution, and within our greater community. VU’s cultural diversity is a distinctive strength. We pride ourselves on our commitment to providing outstanding educational opportunities to an incredibly diverse student population with an experience that is interculturally inclusive, innovative, community connected and transformational.

Our students, who we expect will be global citizens, are given the opportunity to learn from each other across cultural boundaries and this positions them competitively to succeed in an increasingly diverse society — a skill that employers value.

The diversity of our staff also creates a rich tapestry that complements and enhances the work that is undertaken at VU each and every day.

The Cultural Diversity Strategy is an important milestone for the University. We all have a part to play in providing a connected and globally relevant university experience, and this Strategy consolidates a shared understanding of how our various roles and activities create a culturally inclusive, dynamic and respectful University community.

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and the broader University community, with a focus on the key Principles that frame the University’s approach as a whole-of-institution commitment.

I am excited to enact the objectives of the Strategy in partnership with our students and staff, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact this Strategy has on the Victoria University community.

Professor Peter Dawkins AO
Vice-Chancellor and President
Victoria University is renowned for its multicultural richness. The cultural diversity that distinguishes our students, staff and community enriches the VU experience. It enables intercultural interactions and understandings, in so doing, promotes values around social cohesion. As the University of Opportunity and Success, Victoria University has a compelling vision to be open and excellent, creating outstanding opportunities for any student from any background. We are a dynamic and socially inclusive University that empowers the communities within which our multiple campuses sit. As such, VU is the university with a heart.

The Cultural Diversity Strategy addresses the University’s specific, conscious commitment to engage with cultural diversity, as set out in the Transformational Agenda. That is, to build and extend opportunities and initiatives that:

- **connect** us all as a community dedicated to scholarship and active citizenship;
- **enrich** the lives of students, staff and the community; and,
- **celebrate** the powerful benefits that cultural diversity provides.

The Strategy underlines our central tenet: to be renowned as an interculturally engaged, educationally responsive and globally connected university that enriches the lives of many and prepares us for the challenges of the 21st century. The Strategy has four key cultural diversity goals which reflect a whole-of-institution responsibility.
GOAL 1
Lead a whole of institution commitment to fostering an exceptional interculturally engaged VU experience.

Victoria University will continuously improve its approach to creating an inclusive and respectful campus culture through best practice, whole-of-university initiatives. In this way we will develop a collaborative approach to enhancing our Australian and international reputation for being an interculturally engaged learning, teaching and research university.

GOAL 2
Advance culturally inclusive initiatives that lead to excellent student and staff academic, research and citizenship outcomes.

The University will continue to improve the processes, approaches and opportunities that contribute to strong academic and employability practices outcomes for students and staff. This aligns with our strategic vision as the University of Opportunity and Success — to be open and excellent, creating exceptional value for any student from any background. In this way, we will enhance our reputation as a sector leader in providing a distinctive, culturally enriching educational opportunity.

GOAL 3
Provide a harmonious and safe environment that celebrates cultural diversity amongst its students, staff and community.

We will continue to build our profile as a socially responsible educational institution that celebrates its many achievements in promoting and developing its diverse cultures. We will continue to advance University collaborations that contribute to an inclusive and safe university and community environment.

GOAL 4
Build meaningful partnerships that uplift our students, staff and diverse communities.

Finally, we will draw on the existing social and cultural capital within our wider community to identify opportunities for transforming the lives of those community members. The University will continue to build strong relationships with the community, particularly in its heartland west of Melbourne.

These four goals are established around a set of eight guiding Principles of Cultural Diversity outlined in this Strategy.
# PRINCIPLES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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<th>Principle</th>
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<td>Principle 1</td>
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Victoria University has always been quietly proud of its reputation for being one of the most culturally diverse universities in Australia, with students and staff from a wide range of ethnic, linguistic and faith-based backgrounds — both local and international. In essence, we are a multicultural success story.

We proudly represent and champion the cultural diversity of our geographical location in the west of Melbourne. Over several generations, the west has been the first home for a significant number of new residents who have established new lives in Australia. Residents represent cultures from over 130 different nations. VU’s diversity has enabled us to build a rich campus environment with a global outlook, a unique depth of socio-cultural capital and community connection. It is now time to take this commitment to the next level and lead the sector in this area.

The Cultural Diversity Strategy provides a strong framework to build VU’s unique narrative around how our particular University contributes to and advances the transformative potential of the educational experience. It provides a clear affirmation that positions VU as fostering rich, deep intercultural connections. Such connections are multi-directional as they facilitate knowledge building, skill development and positive social impact through every aspect of the VU experience.

Our University’s approach is to be inclusive of all cultures. The view of cultural diversity at VU resonates with the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001):

“Cultural diversity is a source of exchange, innovation and creativity...cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature...it widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development...a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence”.

Cultural diversity, for the purposes of this strategy, encapsulates notions of identities around nationality, ethnicity, race, faith, language(s) background and identifying cultural heritage — noting the intersectionality of any number of these. The Strategy also recognises the multi-directional interactions that occur when members of various cultural groups come together. These interactions at VU are viewed as enriching, respectful, educative, reflexive and inclusive. VU understands that interculturality is achieved when interactions go beyond being just transactional. Rather, our understanding of cultural diversity/interculturality embraces the reciprocity that occurs when multiple perspectives, spaces, experiences, knowledge and mindsets are shared. In short, this intercultural reciprocity is regarded as powerful in terms of its transformative potential. As such, it aligns to VU’s strong social justice agenda and sense of moral purpose.

The Strategy is forward looking as it maps out how we can meet the challenges of the 21st century student who will navigate an increasing globally mobile and agile world. The Strategy commits to creating experiences that share knowledge, connect stakeholders, promote understanding and celebrate humanity through its curriculum and complementary activities. As a University we will continue to advance and effect positive social change through learning and teaching experiences, research and policy advancement, as well as through strategic partnerships with schools, industry and the community.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY’S CULTURAL DIVERSITY AFFIRMATION

TO BE DISTINGUISHED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY AS AN INTERCULTURALLY ENGAGED, EDUCATIONALLY RESPONSIVE AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED UNIVERSITY.
OUR VISION

As the University of Opportunity and Success, we will be open and excellent, creating exceptional value for any student from any background and uplifting the communities in which we operate.

OUR MISSION

We will achieve this vision by:

Education
Providing high-quality, engaging career-based tertiary education at all levels of vocational and higher education with flexible entry and exit points, appropriate pathways, engaging and rigorous curriculum and contemporary delivery; while maintaining rigorous standards and ensuring that all students are supported to meet those standards.

Research and Engagement
Undertaking high-quality and innovative applied and translational research which results in healthier, smarter and sustainable communities in the west of Melbourne and beyond, and connecting deeply with industry and the community, in turn enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Cultural diversity supports and fosters intellectual diversity.
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Victoria University’s Cultural Diversity Strategy is framed by the aspirations and themes outlined in the VU Strategic Plan and Transformational Agenda (White Paper). In particular, this Strategy articulates how it will support the University’s clear focus of moving beyond its current achievements to progress to the next level of becoming world class. It reflects the Vision of being open and providing outstanding opportunities to any student from any background and uplifting communities.

The VU Strategic Plan articulates directions around positioning VU as an open and excellent university. In November 2017 VU released its Transformational Agenda which sets out the Four Big Ideas. At the core of each of these Four Big Ideas is the notion of developing a VU culture that promotes opportunity and success as part of VU’s strong sense of social justice. The intersections between the Strategy and the Four Big Ideas are represented in Figure 1 (see page 11).

Further, in terms of strategic alignment, the Cultural Diversity Strategy is informed by the principles outlined in UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the Australian Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Codes and Standards, and the Victorian Government’s policy commitment, which calls upon a shared responsibility to building a socially cohesive community through active citizenry.

This Strategy embraces the socially responsible ethos that characterises VU and reflects other key University equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives and strategies. This Strategy also supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy (2017–2020).

Paola Balla, Moondani Balluk, 2017
The Affirmation outlined in this Strategy reflects our ongoing commitment to deliver measurable impact that grows and deepens in significance over time for both VU and the entire region, driving economic prosperity and meeting the health, education and community service needs of the diverse and rapidly growing population in the west of Melbourne.
ALIGNMENT WITH THE TRANSFORMATIONAL AGENDA’S FOUR BIG IDEAS

THE MORAL PURPOSE
- Develops and strengthens student and staff capacity to improve and engage with curricular, complementary, research, policy activities and partnerships that aim at uplifting lives.
- Develops a University culture that reduces disadvantage, creates and builds opportunities for all students and communities to effect positive social change.

DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND CONFRONTING 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES
- Develops agility to navigate and operate in a globally connected world that requires intercultural literacies.
- Draws on cultural diversity as a driver of innovation.
- Enhances learning experiences that go beyond the classroom, locally and internationally.
- Contributes to equipping students and staff to effect positive social change.

RECONCEPTUALISING TERTIARY EDUCATION
- Advances the University’s aim to remove constraints and barriers to education so that all students have a chance to gain the skills and knowledge that lead to employability outcomes.
- Joins up cultures and countries drawing on the socio-cultural capacity of staff and students.
- Empowers students and communities by forging connections to solve 21st century challenges.

AGILITY, PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH
- Contributes to capabilities and opportunities that support understanding our students and our markets in order to invest wisely and grow strategically.
- Benchmarking our success with other universities.
The Cultural Diversity Strategy recognises the rich socio-cultural capital of its students, staff, and partners. It aims to foster this capital through rich experiences, capability-building opportunities and excellent collaborations.

The Strategy recognises the relational nature of successful partnerships that lead to transformational experiences, for instance, the intercultural exchanges between students and staff, students and peers, students and their research partners, staff and the community. Our work at the University is characterised by partnerships and areas of engagement.

This Strategy Framework articulates the Four Cultural Diversity Goals that will guide this work as a whole-of-institution partnership across four areas of engagement as represented in Figure 2.

In this way, the Strategy builds on VU’s many achievements as a culturally diverse and responsive University, and, importantly, provide scope to advance the transformative experiences VU cares about — experiences that lead to:

- enhancing student success outcomes;
- furthering the broader staff value proposition of being a great place to work;
- contributing to and enhancing impactful research; and,
- advancing deep connections with industry and community.

In adopting a whole-of-university approach, the Strategy calls upon each member of the University community to be an active and responsive participant. The associated VU Cultural Diversity Action Plan provides a blueprint for the University’s implementation of this Strategy over the next three years.
### VU’s Four Cultural Diversity Goals

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<th>Student Engagement</th>
<th>Research Engagement</th>
<th>Staff Engagement</th>
<th>Community and Industry Engagement</th>
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CULTURAL DIVERSITY GOALS AND HIGH-LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. LEAD A WHOLE OF INSTITUTION COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING AN EXCEPTIONAL INTERCULTURALLY ENGAGED VU EXPERIENCE.

High-level objectives are to:

1.1 Demonstrate a high-level strategic commitment to integrating a whole-of-university approach in creating a culturally inclusive, educationally innovative and globally connected culture that supports the Cultural Diversity Strategy.

1.2 Ensure that the objectives of the VU Cultural Diversity Strategy are reflected in University planning, design, implementation and evaluation processes and practices.

1.3 Advance and develop intercultural literacies programs and resources that enable stronger learning, teaching, research, partnership and employability outcomes.

1.4 Engage in strategic collaborations to inform and develop institutional and partnership initiatives that aim to develop intercultural awareness, engagement and resilient communities.

1.5 Foster critical conversations about cultural diversity and inclusivity through targeted reference groups, collaborations and activities across the University that lead to improved policies, programs, research and practices.

1.6 Collaborate with People and Culture to support culturally inclusive and equity practices around staff recruitment, mentoring and professional development activities to enhance capacity building, progression pathways and leadership.

2. ADVANCE CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE INITIATIVES THAT LEAD TO EXCELLENT ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND CITIZENSHIP OUTCOMES.

High-level objectives are to:

2.1 Enhance and develop specific initiatives that contribute to student success through culturally responsive and enriching curricular and complementary activities, in particular, the development of 21st century skills.

2.2 Contribute to initiatives that develop pathways for Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) students (VU Polytechnic to postgraduate level studies).

2.3 Strengthen links with local and international stakeholders to attract international students, advance international partnerships and improve the internationalisation of the student experience.

2.4 Advance and inform scholarships and programs that aim to address participation barriers for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), refugee and asylum seeker students.

2.5 Leverage our reputation for a committed approach to developing an inclusive cultural campus experience to attract and retain students and staff.

2.6 Contribute to fostering student capability in becoming successful VU graduates in their fields who inspire and uplift their communities and the broader community.
3. PROVIDE A HARMONIOUS AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT WHICH CELEBRATES CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMONGST ITS STUDENTS, STAFF AND COMMUNITY.

**High-level objectives are to:**

3.1 Establish a process that profiles and rewards the contribution of staff, students, alumni and partners in creating a culturally inclusive University community.

3.2 Showcase the University’s multicultural story as part of the transformational difference we make to the lives of our community members.

3.3 Dismantle obstacles to creating a university wide culturally harmonious environment by ensuring all students, staff and partners feel safe, included and supported in all University interactions.

3.4 Promote and celebrate cultural diversity and reconciliation and advocate socially cohesive values that underlie our moral purpose through a range of activities and collaborations.

3.5 Contribute to initiatives around the creation of culturally sensitive physical spaces and facilities on campus for students, staff and their communities.

3.6 Strengthen and develop research initiatives that focus on building community understanding and capacity to be interculturally engaged, safe and resilient. Also, foster VU’s reputation for innovative research and policy advancement work.

4. BUILD MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS THAT UPLIFT OUR STUDENTS, STAFF AND DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.

**High-level objectives are to:**

4.1 Promote and encourage high-quality internal and external research and partnerships which investigate and champion cultural diversity and advance collaborations and programs locally and internationally.

4.2 Strengthen initiatives that foster VU’s legislative remit of being representative of Communities of the West, in particular as part of the University’s broader Engagement Framework through high-quality culturally responsive partnerships.

4.3 Build and enhance key partnerships with corporate, government, social and educational stakeholders to support and enhance learning, teaching, research and employability outcomes.

4.4 Ensure strong engagement with secondary schools and community groups to create pathways and engagement opportunities that attract culturally diverse students.

4.5 Instigate and participate in community events and programs that create engagement opportunities for students, alumni, industry, staff and community members as well as potential stakeholders.

4.6 Position research activities and strengths to inform and advance knowledge in cultural diversity and multiculturalism to enhance the work of the University and its partners, with a specific aim to enhance collaboration and impact.
OUR COMMUNITY
CONTACT
To provide feedback, please contact
Office of the Vice-Chancellor
(03) 9919 4011
vice-chancellor@vu.edu.au
For more information, visit
vu.edu.au/cultural-diversity