

# ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2018

## University of Tasmania

### 1 **Equity outcomes and strategies:** for improving outcomes for people from a low SES background.

Five key strategies underpin work in this area at the University of Tasmania:

(a) The **Schools Engagement Strategy** which focuses on four main themes: Aspiration and attainment for young learners, Building progression pathways, Supporting transition and Researching impact;

(b) The **Community and Partnerships Strategic Plan** and its focus on community based teaching and research and impactful partnerships;

(c) The **Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement** which sets out strategic goals for undergraduate and postgraduate students, learning and teaching and community;

(d) The **Student Experience Strategy** focused on providing comprehensive and quality support services to a diverse student community; and

(e) The **Retention and Success Strategy** focused on engagement with learning, intervention, health and wellbeing and student support.

Each of these strategies takes a comprehensive student lifecycle approach, which recognises that the student support and success commences from point of first contact with the University through to recruitment and transition, early engagement, progression in academic studies and through to graduation. The intended outcomes of these strategies include increasing:

- the proportion of low SES background young people from schools, colleges and TasTAFE who aspire to university, to increase future participation rate of low SES learners;
- the participation rate of adults from low SES communities;
- the participation rate of students from low SES backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, in university preparation, pre degree and support programs;
- the retention and success rates of low SES background students.

### 2 **Key activities:** which will deliver an increase in the access, participation and success of people from a low SES background.

The University has a range of activities that support the student lifecycle and the key activities within each support access, participation and success including:

#### i. **Pre-Access and Access outreach activities with schools and communities**

The University now publishes an annual calendar of outreach activities and events, which includes statewide flagship events and programs which encourage and support low SES background students to experience higher education together with specific national, regional and discipline based activities. Examples of the latter include for Years 5-12 the *Science and Engineering Investigation Awards*- supporting STEM in primary and secondary schools which links to the primary and secondary curriculum;

- Year 5-7: *Children's University* - Raising aspirations and introducing ideas about HE as a pathway;
- Year 7-8: *University Students in Schools* - Raising aspirations and introducing University pathways to low SES and rural schools through work with University student role models/ambassadors and university visits;
- Year 9-10: *Creating my Career* and *Discover My Career* - Exploring future career and study options across 19 career 'clusters' - in partnership with Tasmanian DoE and TasTAFE;
- Year 10: *Residential Summer School* - De-mystifying University study through immersive practical experience over 4 days for low SES background students;

- Year 11- 12: *University Connections (UCP) and High Achiever (HAP) Programs*- Engaging students in University study - extends the school curriculum, contributes to TCE/ATAR, gives credit into University, and builds confidence amongst students to study at HE level;
- Year 11-12: *uniHUBs*- Supporting transition to University through focused support and contact in 11-12 colleges with a high proportion of low SES students.
- Other programs including campus open, discovery and taster days, tours, school outreach and competitions, school ambassadors, school engagement grants etc.

Specific initiatives to engage adult learners in the community include:

- The West Coast initiative - engaging with disadvantaged communities to open up access to HE
- Community Learning Pathways – working with low SES learners through neighbourhood houses in Launceston and Devonport
- Regional and community learning locations –esp. for NW Tasmania and the Cradle Coast

**ii. Access:** Pre entry and Orientation

- Parent and Community information events
- Scholarships and bursaries for low SES students
- Comprehensive admissions including assessed entry
- Foundation units e.g. in science and engineering
- Academic preparation and skills programs e.g. UniStart
- Designated student support and services information contact centre
- Progression agreements esp. with the VET sector
- Enabling and pre degree programs through the University College and Riawunna Centre

**iii. Participation:** First Semester Transition

- Early engagement and early detection of low levels of student engagement
- Student Success Program – peer facilitated support
- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)
- Riawunna Aboriginal unit support
- Student Advisers – Learning Consultations and Student Learning Workshops

**iv. Progress and Attainment:** Progression in Studies

- Managing Academic Progress – Academic Progress Review
- Intermediate qualification exit points e.g. Diplomas, Associate degrees
- Career development and employment – including career peers and career conversations
- Career Mentor Program
- Vice Chancellors Leadership Program
- Innovation in curriculum design - through e.g. experience and engagement units, breadth units and work integrated learning

**3 Evaluation:** how the university plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the equity strategies.

Evaluation of strategies and programs will take place through a number of processes and areas including:

- Monitoring and evaluation of activities against targets in the underpinning strategies through: collection of data on numbers, attitudinal change, discussion with student and teachers to ensure authentic feedback;
- Joint work with the Department of Education on longitudinal learner monitoring and tracking with the aim of establishing new systems in 2018;
- Research and evaluation work of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment;

- Applied and mixed method research and evaluation for specific initiatives including external collaboration with other universities, e.g. on tracking success of low SES and mature aged students, and regional and local partners;
- Internal analysis using Business Intelligence data of low SES student information;
- Monitoring and evaluation of student retention performance and success including the establishment of a Performance Monitoring Group;
- Student Evaluation Surveys e.g. eVALUate, Student Experience Survey

Ethics applications and clearances (including those needed from the Department of Education) are sought as appropriate, and staff are encouraged to disseminate and publish results of research and evaluation.

#### **4 Partnerships and collaboration:** who the university will partner and collaborate with and how this will improve equity performance.

The University partners and collaborates with a wide range of organisations in delivering its Access and Participation Plan and key strategies. These include:

- The Tasmanian Department of Education- and in particular Learning Services (North and South), the My Education Team and the Educational and Performance Review Team;
- LINC Tasmania- strategic partnership including use of premises and learner support;
- Schools, Colleges and skill centres across the public, catholic and independent sectors;
- TasTAFE through joint outreach activities, pathway development and articulation arrangements
- Communities, Aboriginal and community groups, Neighbourhood Houses, TasCOSS, Local councils etc;
- Industry and Business through Course Advisory Committees, research and student work placements and work with partners e.g. BitLink on projects;
- State, City, District and local government through e.g. State Partnership Agreement, Launceston and Hobart City Deals, Devonport Festival of Learning and Burnie BIG.

These partnerships will improve equity performance through joint work in identifying low SES learners who can benefit from programs, the design and implementation of programs and activities, targeting of initiatives and joint bids for development and project funding. External partners also participate in University committees including, for example, the Schools and Community Engagement Advisory Committee and the Peter Underwood Centre Advisory Committee, which both play a key role in evaluating impact, and the North West Advisory Board. Members of University staff also sit on external boards including e.g. the Circular Head Education and Training Consultative Committee.