

# ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019

## CQUniversity Australia (Central Queensland University)

### 1 Equity outcomes and strategies:

CQUniversity recognises its status as a regional university with a significant percentage of students from disadvantaged and traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, including higher-than-average participation of students from remote, regional, Indigenous, Low Socioeconomic Status (LSES) and first in family groups. “Access and participation” is not an add-on at CQUniversity; it is the University’s core business.

In late 2018, CQUniversity commissioned the Nous Group to undertake an independent evaluation of its Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) activity, including a number of “legacy programs” that had been funded under HEPPP since 2015. The results of this evaluation were tabled in early 2019.

One of the notable recommendations was that CQUniversity should develop a new Equity, Access & Diversity Strategy, as a guiding framework from which to structure its suite of HEPPP-funded programs. This would represent a change in approach from “bottom up” (allocating funds to LSES-focused programs via an open bidding process) to “top down” (nominating programs based on their alignment to strategic objectives). The change will be implemented in 2020, with 2019 considered a transitional year for the University’s HEPPP approach.

With the impending introduction of a new institutional strategic plan in 2019, it is an opportune time to develop a new Equity, Access & Diversity Strategy that aligns to overarching university objectives. It is projected that a draft Equity, Access & Diversity Strategy will be in place by May 2019, in time to begin the 2020 HEPPP planning process.

Supporting strategies already in train include:

- Student Retention, Participation & Success: Guiding Principles & Strategic Directions 2019-2023 (endorsed by CQUniversity Council in late 2018, for a 2019 implementation)
- Indigenous Leadership & Engagement Strategy 2019-2022 (currently in draft, awaiting endorsement in 2019)

Overarching outcomes sought by CQUniversity include improved participation, retention, success and completion rates, for domestic higher education students from LSES and other equity categories.

### 2 Key activities:

In terms of LSES-specific activities, the following HEPPP-funded programs are in place for 2019:

Program	Equity Initiatives Framework Stage	Description
<b>Community Aspiration in Education Program (CAP-ED)</b>	Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary Yr 11-12</li> <li>• VET</li> <li>• Mature Age</li> </ul>	<p>The Community Aspirations Program (CAP-ED) is an outreach program aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from low SES backgrounds who are at risk of being disengaged from high school, or mature aged prospective students living in low SES communities.</p> <p>The program targets these prospective students by sharing knowledge and information regarding study pathways, and preparing prospective students for pathways to higher education through literacy and numeracy skills development.</p>
<b>CQUniCares LSES Scholarships and Financial Literacy</b>	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Year Students</li> <li>• Progression During Studies</li> </ul>	<p>The CQUniCares LSES Scholarships and Financial Literacy program delivers scholarships and financial assistance to domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds.</p> <p>The program offers five key areas of support to these students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholarships and bursaries to assist students with start-up costs such as textbooks, uniforms, technology and equipment;</li> <li>• Accommodation Scholarships to assist students who are required to relocate in order to study internally on specific CQUni campuses</li> <li>• Travel bursaries to assist distance students with the costs associated with travelling to and attending residential schools</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry Placement Scholarships and Work Readiness Bursaries to assist with the costs associated with being workplace ready and completing unpaid compulsory placements as a course requirement;</li> <li>• Financial literacy training to build the financial resilience and life skills of students.</li> </ul>
<b>CQUni Connect</b>	Pre-Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary</li> <li>• Yr 7-10</li> </ul> Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yr 11-12</li> </ul>	<p>CQUni Connect is an aspiration-building and career-focused program built upon a research-informed practice model that combines the SODI Career Planning Development Model, theories of human-social development and social learning theory into a long-term Learner Progression Framework (LPF).</p> <p>The integrated model emphasises characteristics of successful outreach interventions that support student aspirations early in their educational journey are progressive, people-rich and sustained over time. This results in young people who are able to make informed choices and are equipped with effective navigational skills.</p> <p>Early intervention begins with upper primary school students at low SES schools moving through junior and senior secondary grades. CQUni Connect’s program delivery model uses a team of current degree students (Connect Assistants) to leverage the power of near-peer role modelling. The combination of these theoretical models enable the implementation of programs, which</p>

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		impact the attitudes and beliefs of students, teachers and community to effectively widen participation in tertiary education.
<b>Embedding LSES Undergraduate Literacy</b>	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Year Students</li> </ul>	<p>The Embedding LSES Undergraduate Literacy Program aims to improve the learning outcomes and success of first year low SES undergraduate students by embedding support for academic literacy skills within core units.</p> <p>The program requires collaboration with discipline staff to provide tailored unit level support with assessment tasks to students. Academic Learning Advisers (ALAs) work directly with students online or on campus as a group or individually using study material linked to the writing of assessment tasks.</p> <p>Through the provision of relevant and easily accessible assistance to Advisers and access to online study resources, low SES students have the opportunity to improve fundamental academic literacy skills, preparedness to meet the requirements of higher education and develop positive behaviours and attitudes towards seeking information and feedback. This will in turn increase students' confidence in their approach to study.</p>
<b>LSES Accessibility and Engagement</b>	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Year Students</li> <li>• Progression During Studies</li> </ul>	The LSES Accessibility Engagement program delivers a proactive tailored framework of support to low SES students living with disability to improve retention.

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	Attainment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion</li> </ul>	
<b>Smoothing Assessment Transitions for VET Students</b>	Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET</li> </ul> Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Year Students</li> </ul>	<p>The Smoothing Assessment Transition for VET Students (SATVS) initiative works to address the needs of low SES students transitioning from VET to Higher Education at CQUni in relation to understanding how best to address the challenges that they experience with respect to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.</p> <p>Existing system data about the current academic results and attrition of low SES students entering CQUni via a VET pathway and student voice data will be gathered to identify what worked in supporting these students, what was not helpful, and what could better support low SES students on this pathway.</p> <p>This data will be analysed and used to inform a series of recommendations (a model) of how CQUni could better support low SES students in this transition.</p>
<b>Personalising the LSES Student Experience</b>	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Year Students</li> <li>• Progression During Studies</li> </ul>	<p>The Personalising the LSES Student Experience (PLSE) program assists domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds to be better prepared and to succeed in their studies.</p> <p>All commencing undergraduates from LSES backgrounds receive an initial personalised phone call from student mentors during which they receive valuable information about</p>

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		<p>their chosen course and the supports available to them.</p> <p>Students identified at risk and/or in need of support are referred to an Academic Liaison Officer from their School who follow up with the students and guide them to the services they need to help them to succeed.</p> <p>The PLSE program also follows-up with students from LSES backgrounds who fail to re-enrol at the start of each term or who have formally withdrawn to determine the reasons they discontinued their studies and to identify the on-going support required to assist them to succeed.</p>
<p><b>CQUni Youth STEM Academy (CYSA)</b></p>	<p>Pre-Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yr 7-10</li> </ul> <p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yr 11-12</li> </ul>	<p>The CQUni Youth STEM Academy (CYSA) works as a model for aspiring low SES students to attend higher education through appointing two year-9 students at each low SES state high school as STEM Ambassadors to fill the void of science and engineering role models. This model could be applied to any CQUni program and is not restricted to just STEM.</p> <p>The CYSA program will enable Ambassadors to assist in delivering an excursion to CQUni, embedding at least one of their own STEM activities into their school curriculum, and running the CYSA Conference where each school shares the outcomes of their STEM activities.</p> <p>To sustain aspirations to attend higher education, the CYSA will also facilitate a two-day year 10 Science</p>

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		and Engineering Design Challenge, offered exclusively to low SES students. By leveraging off other CQUni HEPPP programs, such as CQUni Connect. The CYSA will also encourage low SES students to transition into higher education by continuing activities through to year 12, such as encouraging low SES students to enrol into CQUni's Start University Now (SUN) program.
<b>LSES STEPS Online Support</b>	Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature Age</li> </ul>	<p>The LSES STEPS Online Support initiative provides a supportive learning environment in which an LSES STEPS Online Coordinator will monitor student progress and provide study support for STEPS students studying online who are from a low SES background.</p> <p>The Coordinator arranges interventions from other specific CQUni support staff when problems arise that may negatively affect an individual student's ability to continue their study. Course guidance and emotional support is provided to assist students to prioritise their study, strengthen their self-management skills and address any factors that may, without intervention, result in a withdrawal from study.</p>
<b>CQUni HEPPP LSES Student Support</b>	Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Leavers</li> </ul> Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Year Students</li> </ul>	The CQUni HEPPP LSES Student Support program provides financial assistance to undergraduate domestic students from low SES backgrounds to improve the retention of these students by offering and administering CQUni Bookshop account credits. The LSES Student Support program also provides financial assistance and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progression During Studies</li> </ul>	<p>pre-access assistance to low SES secondary schools who participate in CQUni Connect programs, by offering and administering QTAC Vouchers to cover the cost of their application to university. QTAC support is also extended to prospective students from low SES backgrounds who have participated in the CAP-ED program or have been in contact with the CQUni Student Advice Team.</p> <p>In order to build capacity and improve the retention of new domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds, the LSES Student Support Program develop and distribute a LSES Student Support Welcome Kit.</p>
<b>CQUni HEPPP Research and Evaluation</b>	n/a	<p>The CQUni HEPPP Research and Evaluation Program works to investigate and provide recommendations to the CQUni HEPPP Progress Group on the areas of need and the supports identified by students from low SES backgrounds that would assist them to complete their studies.</p> <p>The research being employed is a mixed-methods approach involving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of an all-student survey to inform the CQUni HEPPP strategy</li> <li>2. Focus groups with students from low SES backgrounds (STEPS/TEP and undergraduate), which will provide richer and deeper data on the themes identified in the survey.</li> </ol>
<b>BIG HEPPP Analytics</b>	n/a	<p>The BIG HEPPP Analytics initiative is a support program, providing consultation and facilitation of</p>



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		<p>effective data management, analysis and reporting for CQUni HEPPP programs/initiatives, as well as for CQUni HEPPP Program management, research and evaluation.</p> <p>The BIG HEPPP Analytics initiative builds on the efforts of 2018 and continues to automate standard data services for HEPPP stakeholders. The focus for 2019 is the investment into deeper analysis to allow CQUni HEPPP Coordinators to accurately identify LSES CQUni students and tailor their initiatives to their specific needs.</p> <p>The BIG HEPPP Analytics initiative supports the CQUni HEPPP Program Management team and the CQUni HEPPP Progress Group work on evaluation of CQUni against external organisations.</p>
<b>CQUni HEPPP Program Management</b>	n/a	<p>The CQUni HEPPP 2019 Program Management program is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction and coordination of all CQUni HEPPP programs and initiatives, to ensure that they meet CQUni expectations and Australian Government funding and reporting requirements, which work to improve access to higher education for students from low SES backgrounds.</p> <p>The program works to support CQUni HEPPP Program/Initiative Coordinators in progressing programs/initiatives and outcomes, by providing the necessary advice, training, tools and resources required to deliver on agreed</p>

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		<p>program/initiative outcomes, on-time and within budget.</p> <p>In addition, the CQUni HEPPP Program Management program is responsible for annual reporting to the Australian Government on the effectiveness of the allocated funding – in particular, how CQUni grant funding aligns with national guidelines that support low SES students.</p>

### 3 Evaluation:

CQUniversity has a multi-pronged approach to evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its access and participation programs, including:

- Regular surveying of students (and subsequent reporting and evaluation) on topics such as widening participation, orientation, scholarships, disability and student readiness;
- Anecdotal feedback collected (and subsequently reported and evaluated) through programs such as Personalising The LSES Student Experience; and
- The BIG HEPPP Analytics program, which will pull together data from multiple sources and streamline it into a consolidated dashboard, for “live” reporting and analysis by individual HEPPP program coordinators and CQUniversity decision makers.

### 4 Partnerships and collaboration:

CQUniversity will maintain its large-scale CQUni Connect program in 2019, which will continue to build upon the 200-plus mature partnerships with primary and high schools throughout Queensland. The CQUni Youth STEM Academy will further cement collaboration with schools in the Wide Bay Burnett Region, while the CAP-ED program will continue its ground-breaking work with Indigenous communities throughout regional Queensland.