

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019**La Trobe University**

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

a) Outcomes for people from low SES backgrounds:

- Continue to exceed the national average of the participation rate of domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds.

b) Strategies for developing positive outcomes for people from low SES backgrounds:

- Increase participation and achievement of under-represented students through equity scholarships targeted to students from low SES backgrounds;
- Maintain the University's outreach programs, including the School Partnerships Program;
- Maintain and enhance the University-wide approach to peer mentoring and academic advising;
- Ensure that equity is embedded within La Trobe curricula, including through the mandatory Wominjeka module exploring Indigenous cultures;
- Ensure that equity is embedded within co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, including low SES bursaries for outbound mobility and employability;
- Provide targeted scholarships and bursaries to low SES students, including to care leavers and students from refugee backgrounds;
- Continue to raise participation through expansion of alternative entry pathways, including the 'Pathways' program on regional campuses.

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

La Trobe uses HEPPP funding to support major equity initiatives across the University, including:

i. Pre-access (outreach to schools and communities)

School Partnerships Program: Collaborates with 39 low SES schools and two Flexible Learning Centres to deliver activities that provide engagement opportunities for students to demystify higher education and build academic preparedness and capability.

Science, Health and Engineering (SHE) Outreach programs: Stimulate interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines for students from low SES schools.

Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce (ASSC) Outreach programs: Deliver a suite of activities for students from low SES schools to increase student capabilities, build self-efficacy, and raise awareness of career opportunities upon completion of a university degree.

UniBridges: Increase the interest and achievement of students from low SES backgrounds in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). This aim is promoted by delivering thematic curriculum across a cluster of secondary school subjects.

ii. Access (pre-entry and admissions)

Access Scholarships: Awarded on the basis of educational disadvantage to support students.

Bursaries for Care Leavers: Awarded to all commencing, domestic undergraduate students at the University who spent time in formal out-of-home care (i.e. foster care, residential care, kinship care, ward of the State).

Bursaries for Students from Refugee Backgrounds: Awarded to commencing, domestic undergraduate students at the University who entered on humanitarian visas.

iii. Participation (transition and progression during studies)

Succeed Program: University-wide communication and referral strategy designed to identify and engage commencing undergraduate students at risk of disengagement. The program is informed by predictive and learning analytics to identify risks of failure and attrition among low SES and other under-represented groups.

Subject Support Tutor Program: A discipline and course-specific academic support program for academically under-prepared students. The Program includes one-on-one or small group support for students requiring additional explanation of subject content, and monitoring of student engagement in order to follow-up with students who show early signs of difficulty.

Peer Learning Advisers (PLAs): Provide academic skills advice, numeracy, and literacy advice to students.

Equality and Diversity Centre (EDC): Promotes equal participation of all students and staff of the University and fosters an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

iv. Progress and attainment (successful completion and preparation for graduate employment)

Work Help: Employability Grants: Awarded on the basis of financial disadvantage to assist low SES students with placements and internships.

Student Mobility Assistance Scholarships: Awarded on the basis of financial disadvantage to assist low SES students participating in an overseas exchange.

3 Evaluation: how the effectiveness of the equity strategies will be evaluated.

The evaluation and monitoring processes deployed:

- The Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR) will continue its role of program evaluation for internal projects such as outreach and school partnership activities, while building capacity among other units for self-evaluation through developing evaluation frameworks and internal communications;
- HEPPP project managers will provide project evaluations based on student geo-demographics and indicators including access, success, retention, and completion;
- Overall access, participation, satisfaction, and success rates of under-represented students, as well as graduate outcomes, will continue to be monitored through the University's Student Information System and surveys such as the SES, CEQ, and GOS.

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

The University has partnerships with 33 low SES schools, flexible learning centres, and a range of broader strategic partnerships with groups such as the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, the peak body for the Victorian welfare sector. The partnerships include strategies to raise university aspirations, access, awareness, and achievement for low SES students.