

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2020

La Trobe University

1 **Equity outcomes and strategies:** for improving outcomes for 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:

- Develop and implement La Trobe's inaugural Student Equity and Diversity Plan (2020-2022);
- 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, academic advising and subject support;
- 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;
- Continue to utilise predictive and learning analytics to identify risks of failure and attrition among low SES students.

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: Collaborate with 41 low SES schools and two Flexible Learning Centres to deliver sequential activities that provide knowledge and understanding of university, academic preparation, and career planning and management linked to university qualifications.

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: Increase the capabilities and pathways of students from low SES and regional schools by providing high quality enrichment opportunities and curriculum support in ASSC related studies.

The Bradford Shepparton Pathway Program: Support Year 11 students from low SES backgrounds in the Shepparton area through the final 15 months of secondary schooling.

Wildlife Sanctuary Outreach: Provide an opportunity for students from low SES schools to participate in hands on ecological investigations and citizen science in La Trobe's 30-hectare outdoor laboratory. Planned outreach activities include workshops designed to assist with bushfire recovery efforts.

In2Science Program: Match University student mentors with STEM classes or small groups of students in low SES and regional/rural/remote schools. The Program relates schoolwork to real-world examples and encourages the pursuit of STEM study into Year 12 and beyond.

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.

La Trobe University and Country Education Foundation scholarships: Provided to young school leavers from rural and regional Australia to assist with the direct costs associated with education including transport, accommodation, textbooks, equipment and fieldwork.

iii. Participation (transition and progression during studies)

Succeed Program: Identify and engage commencing undergraduate students at risk of disengagement. This University-wide communication and referral strategy is informed by predictive and learning analytics.

Subject Support Tutor Program: Provide discipline and course-specific academic support for academically under-prepared students.

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

Maths and Science Hubs: Assist students who are lacking in the discipline skills of Maths, Anatomy, Physiology, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Student Support Coordinator program: Assist low SES students to develop a sustainable education plan, ensure students are connected to the right supports for individual success, and design and deliver specialist programs and activities.

Predictive Analytics Project: Provide the student-facing services at La Trobe with predictive and learning analytics to identify risks of failure and attrition, with a focus on low SES students.

Equity and Diversity Centre: Promote 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)

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 university plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the equity strategies.

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, 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 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 of low SES students.