MU **Murdoch University**

Progress Report 2024

Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

2024 Highlights

In March, we launched our EDI Sub-Strategy, an ambitious roadmap for achieving the commitments outlined in the University's Strategy, Ngala Kwop Biddi.

From mid-late 2023, we met with key stakeholders across education, research and engagement to co-design the sub-strategy.

We published a brand new website to share our sub-strategy, resources and research.

Unveiled the first space on campus named after a woman.

In February, our International Women's Day event honoured Rosemary van den Berg, the first Aboriginal person to be awarded a PhD in Western Australia, through the naming of the Rosemary van den Berg room in Boola Katijin.

Achieved Bronze Accreditation in the Australian Workplace Equality Index.

In June, Murdoch received the Bronze accreditation, recognising our commitment to LGBTIQA+ inclusion, equality and equity, and to ensuring that we provide a welcoming and secure environment for all our employees and students.

Submitted the first SAGE Athena Swan Cygnet Award.

In October, Murdoch's first Cygnet Award reporting on LGBTIQA+ Inclusion was submitted.

Installed WA's first Pride Crosswalk.

In January, the first Pride Crosswalk was installed in WA at the Perth campus - a visible commitment to allyship and inclusion for new and returning staff and students.

Finalised the first draft of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

In March, the RAP Working Group was established, with the first draft finalised in November and anticipated for submission to Reconciliation Australia in December 2024.

Established a new Gender Equity Advisory Group.

Gender equity champions met for the first time in November as part of a new GE Advisory Group, ready to build momentum in 2025.

Events and Activities

Reconciliation.

National Reconciliation Week.

Murdoch University, in collaboration with ECU and JCU, hosted a significant National Reconciliation Week panel titled "Post-Referendum: What's Next for Universities?" This hybrid event provided a reflective space for over 350 participants from 30 universities to discuss the evolving role of reconciliation in higher education, featuring insights from prominent First Nations leaders.

Post-Referendum: What's Next for Universities?

In recognition of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament Referendum anniversary, Murdoch University, in collaboration with ECU and JCU, published the report *Post-Referendum: What's Next for Universities?*

The report draws insights from the NRW event, capturing key takeaways, participant questions, and reflective data. It emphasizes the pivotal role of universities in advancing reconciliation, and serves as a guiding resource for embedding Indigenous perspectives and meaningful reconciliation across governance, teaching, and learning.

Reconciliation Walk.

A temporary outdoor installation featuring a timeline of key dates and milestones, honoring truth-telling and Indigenous excellence throughout history. This self-guided walk invited reflection on Indigenous achievements and stories, fostering connection to the journey of reconciliation.

Murdoch Yarns.

The creation of Murdoch Yarns, in collaboration with the PVC First Nations office, provided a series of facilitated sessions for staff to engage with First Nations colleagues. These discussions explored topics on First Nations matters and reconciliation, fostering community and strengthening relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. This initiative has become an essential space for open dialogue, learning, and connection within the university.

Acknowledgment of Country Shirts.

Following consultation with the Reconciliation Working Group, Karrak Network, and Aboriginal Advisory Group, EDI initiated the design of a shirt featuring an Acknowledgment of Country, to enhance visibility and pay respect to First Nations cultures and communities. Over 13 teams have already purchased the shirts, showing strong support for this initiative.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

Voices from the Global South.

A new community event in collaboration with the CALD Advisory Group, exploring research access in the Global South with a panel of experts, engaging both local and international communities.

Gender Equity.

Silent March Against Domestic & Family Violence

Our team and staff from across the University joined the Silent March Against Domestic & Family Violence in Forest Chase for 16 Days in WA.

16 Days in WA – It's in the bag.

Hosted a donation and packing party for "It's in the Bag", packing and donating over 50 bags for those in need.

LGBTIQA+.

Pridefest WA.

Celebrated in the Pridefest WA 2024 Pride Parade with over 90 community members and allies.

Hosted a stall at Fairday, connecting with the wider Perth community and promoting Murdoch's LGBTIQA+ initiatives.

50th Anniversary Pride Walk.

Brought staff and students through five stories of LGBTIQA+ history at Murdoch, from the West Pride Archives to the Progress Pride Flag.

IDAHOBIT.

Hosted the Intersections Panel event, bringing together queer voices from First Nations, CALD, disability, youth, and international student intersections.

Published an opinion piece in the West Australian, sharing reflections about he importance of IDAHOBIT and what it means to Murdoch.

Fair Play Panel: Next Steps for Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion in Sport.

Presented by the LGBTIQA+ Advisory Group, Queer Collective and EDI team, Murdoch brought together experts for a strength-based discussion of meaningful inclusion of trans and gender diverse people in sport.

Wear It Purple Day (WIPD).

Supported teams across the University to host their own WIPD celebrations, and engaged with students at the Murdoch Markets, connecting with over 150 staff and students.

Disability and Neurodiversity.

International Day of People With Disability.

A training session delivered by the Patricia Giles Centre is scheduled in December for front-line staff and focused on supporting women with a disability through family and domestic violence.

Disability Pride.

Celebrated for the first time at Murdoch with an "Our Voices" panel event, and an article from the DAND Advisory Group.

Training Offerings.

Ally Training.

12 staff/student sessions, supported with regular content updates.

Unconscious Bias.

4 staff sessions.

Intercultural Competency.

4 staff sessions.

Sexual Harassment & Active Bystander.

1 session, facilitated by Circle Green Community Legal to front-line staff as part of our 16 Days in WA initiatives.

Family and Domestic Violence and Disability Workshop.

1 session delivered by the Patricia Giles Centre is scheduled in December for front line staff and focused on supporting women with a disability through family and domestic violence.

LinkedIn Learning.

Created a library of EDI courses and lessons that staff can access through LinkedIn Learning.

Engagement

Internal.

Consultation.

- 5 Associate Dean EDI Community of Practice meetings.
- 13 Advisory Group meetings (across all our EDI Advisory Groups).
- 3 RAP and 1 Athena Swan Working Party meetings.
- Karrak Network
- PVC First Nations Office
- Boola Katitjin accessibility upgrades
- Engagement Surveys
- Gender Affirmation Leave
- Campus Redevelopment

EDI Action Plan Support.

- School of Psychology
- School of Engineering

Advisory Groups.

- 4 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Advisory Group meetings
- 4 LGBTIQA+ Advisory Group meetings
- 4 Disability and Neurodiversity (DAND) Advisory Group meetings
- 1 Gender Equity Advisory Group meetings (newly established)

Resource Development.

- Parental Leave Toolkit
- Over 30 news articles
- Annual EDI Calendar
- Security Services training resources

Student Placements.

- Supervised 2 COD303 student placements

External.

Collaborations and Engagement.

- CEOs for Gender Equity
- Ability Heroes
- Ruah
- Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australia (EPHEA)
- Higher Education Australia Pride Practitioners Network - attended regular meetings and provided inter-institutional advice
- Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success
- Office of Multicultural Interests
- Aboriginal Advisory Group
- Edith Cowan University
- James Cook University

Compliance Reporting.

- Public Sector Commission's EEO Report
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Annual Report
- Disability, Access, and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) Report

Memberships.

- Diversity Council Australia
- Reconciliation Australia
- Reconciliation WA
- Pride in Diversity
- Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE)

Sponsorships.

- Zonta Perth Women's Club (Gold Tier Sponsorship)

Challenges

Team Capacity.

Limited Team Capacity.

The team operated solely on fractional appointments, with no full-time Project Coordinator positions. This made it challenging to progress initiatives as efficiently as we would have liked.

Delays to CALD Projects and Initiatives.

Shortly after appointment, our Project Coordinator for CALD had to go on extended leave, which meant that many of our planned CALD projects and initiatives were delayed or put on hold. We haven't been able to make the progress we had planned in the CALD space, which is now going to be a main focus for 2025.

Understaffed Disability and Neurodiversity Projects.

Until October, the team did not have a dedicated Project Coordinator for Disability and Neurodiversity, relying instead on other Project Coordinators to further these initiatives outside of their intended scope.

Creating the Office of the PVC EDI.

Alongside our planned operations, we also had to form our team and address administrative needs. This included recruitment, onboarding, office setup, and establishing digital systems. With these tasks largely underway, we are poised for greater momentum in 2025.

Within the University.

Stagnated Athena Swan Progress.

Athena Swan was largely inactive until May, due to the absence of a dedicated Athena Swan Project Lead, and the dissolution of both the GEMM Committee and Engine Room groups the previous year. Poor data availability and evaluation of initiatives, coupled with delayed implementation of initiatives in the previous Bronze Action Plan, has required a recalibration of Cygnet Award KPAs.

An Athena Swan Working Group was established to help support Murdoch's pathway forward and will provide oversight of outstanding KPAs, linking actions and outputs to clear measures of progress and impact.

Lack of clarity around EDI's role in the University Ecosystem.

There is some confusion and ambiguity surrounding what responsibilities and support fall under the EDI team, with inconsistent expectations from different areas within the University.

Inconsistent appointment of Associate Deans of EDI.

The impact we're able to make in individual schools has been largely dependent on whether or not they have appointed an AD EDI, which has prevented us from making an equal impact across the different areas.

Anticipated Challenges for 2025.

Limited resources to expand our training offerings.

Given our limited resources for 2025, we won't be able to expand our EDI training suite as extensively or as quickly as we had envisioned.

Communicating our role within Murdoch's Ecosystem.

We are a very small team with a very broad, whole-of-University remit. With the EDI team moving more towards an advisory role, we will need to be communicating our capacity and what support we can provide within the University.

Mobilising leaders across the University.

Our success hinges on the willingness and openness of leaders across the University to adopt our recommendations and action EDI initiatives in their areas. While we've built relationships with key leaders who champion these efforts, achieving consistency across all areas remains a pressing challenge.

Adapting to shifting Government expectations.

We will need to navigate ambiguous and evolving expectations of government organizations and understand how we will be funded within a needs-based funding system.