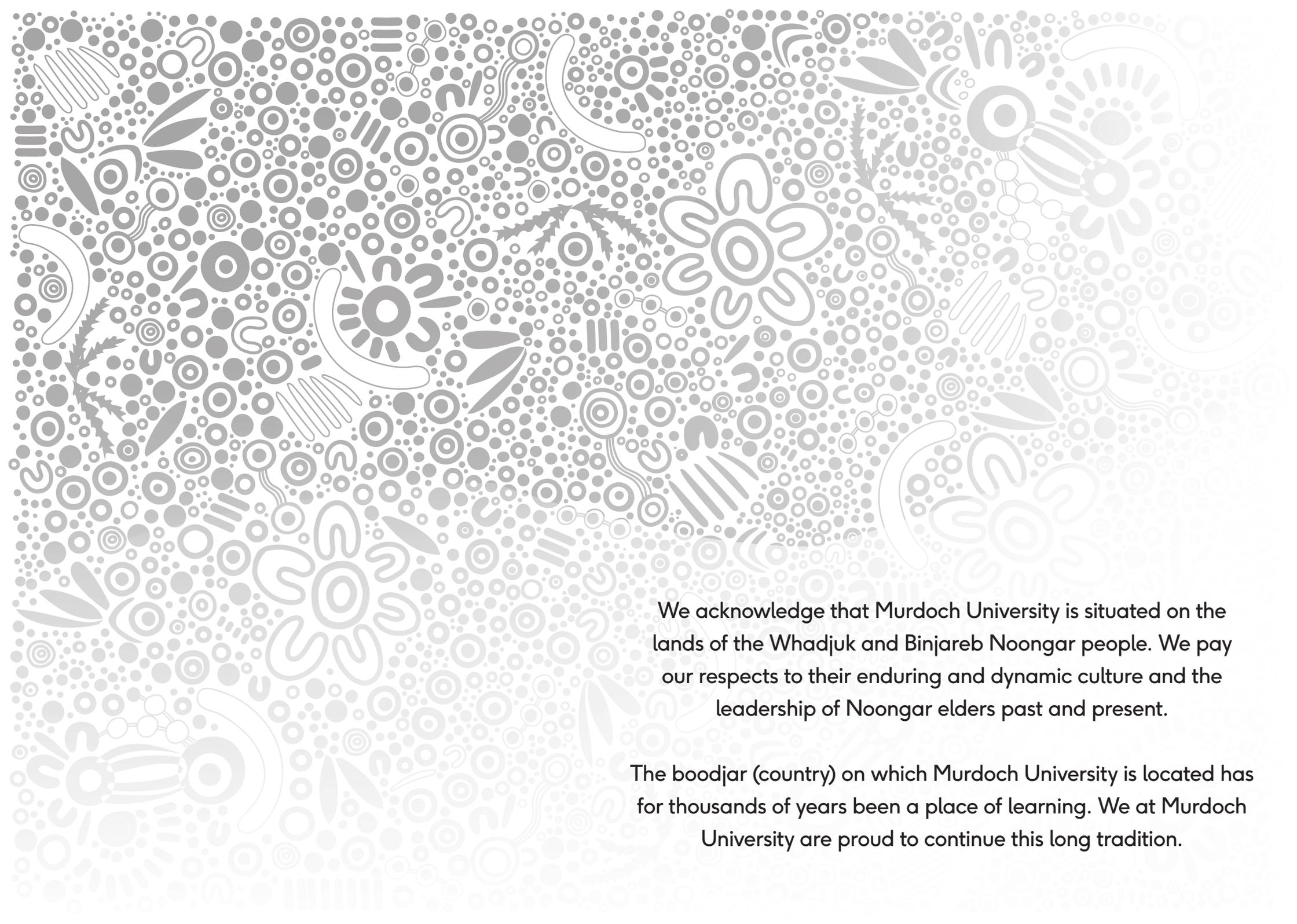




SUB-STRATEGY 2023-2030

**Equity, Diversity
and Inclusion**

Ngala kwop biddi.
Building a brighter
future, together.



We acknowledge that Murdoch University is situated on the lands of the Whadjuk and Binjareb Noongar people. We pay our respects to their enduring and dynamic culture and the leadership of Noongar elders past and present.

The boodjar (country) on which Murdoch University is located has for thousands of years been a place of learning. We at Murdoch University are proud to continue this long tradition.

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Our *Journey*

Building on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) commitments outlined in Murdoch University's 2023- 2030 strategy: Ngala Kwop Biddi: Building a Brighter Future, Together, this sub-strategy offers a road map for achieving these commitments.

Our shared vision and mission for EDI is to become a sector leader by celebrating and modelling a genuinely inclusive community where everyone can reach their potential, demonstrating a strong commitment to **social justice, social inclusion, and human rights in all that we do.**



Realising this vision requires careful, deliberate, and specific action from all members of the University community, guided by the University values of authenticity, integrity, respect, inclusivity, and openness.

EDI in an institution is not a given; it is a commitment to ongoing and explicit action which ensures that everyone within our community feels safe, supported, and valued as their authentic selves in their education, research, and engagement activities. EDI maturity within an organisation, and individuals, requires compassion, curiosity, humility, and a willingness to learn and understand how others view and experience the world. It also requires deep self-reflection and an openness to let go of preconceptions, unpack stereotypes, and address one's relative privilege and cultural bias in a given context.

Working with EDI as a priority focus is not always easy or comfortable, but it drives the compassion, collaboration, innovation, motivation, and expansive thinking needed for us to build a brighter future, together. This sub-strategy is designed to leverage the strength, insight, and innovation that Murdoch's diversity brings to its core activities: Education, Research, and Engagement and to champion this within the broader community. This will be achieved through a range of education, representation, celebration, and support initiatives, guided by comprehensive stakeholder consultation and the University strategy.

Rebecca Bennett (PhD)

Pro Vice Chancellor (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)
Murdoch University





Defining EDI at Murdoch

A strategic focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion aims to ensure that **all people, regardless of race, culture, ability, religion, gender, sexuality, age, economic class, or background**, can achieve their full potential.

This is supported by:

- Respecting and valuing diverse worldviews and lived experiences.
- Providing support and resources to ensure everyone can succeed, regardless of background or circumstance.
- Providing all members of the community with tools and knowledge to create a safe, empowering, and inclusive campus and society.

The key to effective EDI lies in defining and addressing the acronym in full. 'Equity', 'Diversity', and 'Inclusion' have distinct imperatives – all of which must be addressed to ensure every member of the community feels seen, supported and safe to bring their whole selves to work and study.

While there are varied interpretations of the terms, the following working definitions are offered as a guide to support strategic alignment with Ngala Kwop Biddi's EDI theme:



Equity refers to explicit actions and support structures which ensure all members of the community can realise their potential.

Equity is different from 'equality', which assumes treating everyone the same leads to fairness. An equity-based approach recognises that fairness requires addressing systemic and individual disparities, which can differ depending on the unique circumstances of each individual or group.

Diversity refers to population demographics, acknowledging the differences between people.

This can act as a measure to see if there is equitable representation of population diversity in all areas, and across all levels of the university.

Inclusion refers to sense of belonging, safety, empowerment, and agency for members of diverse groups in the community.

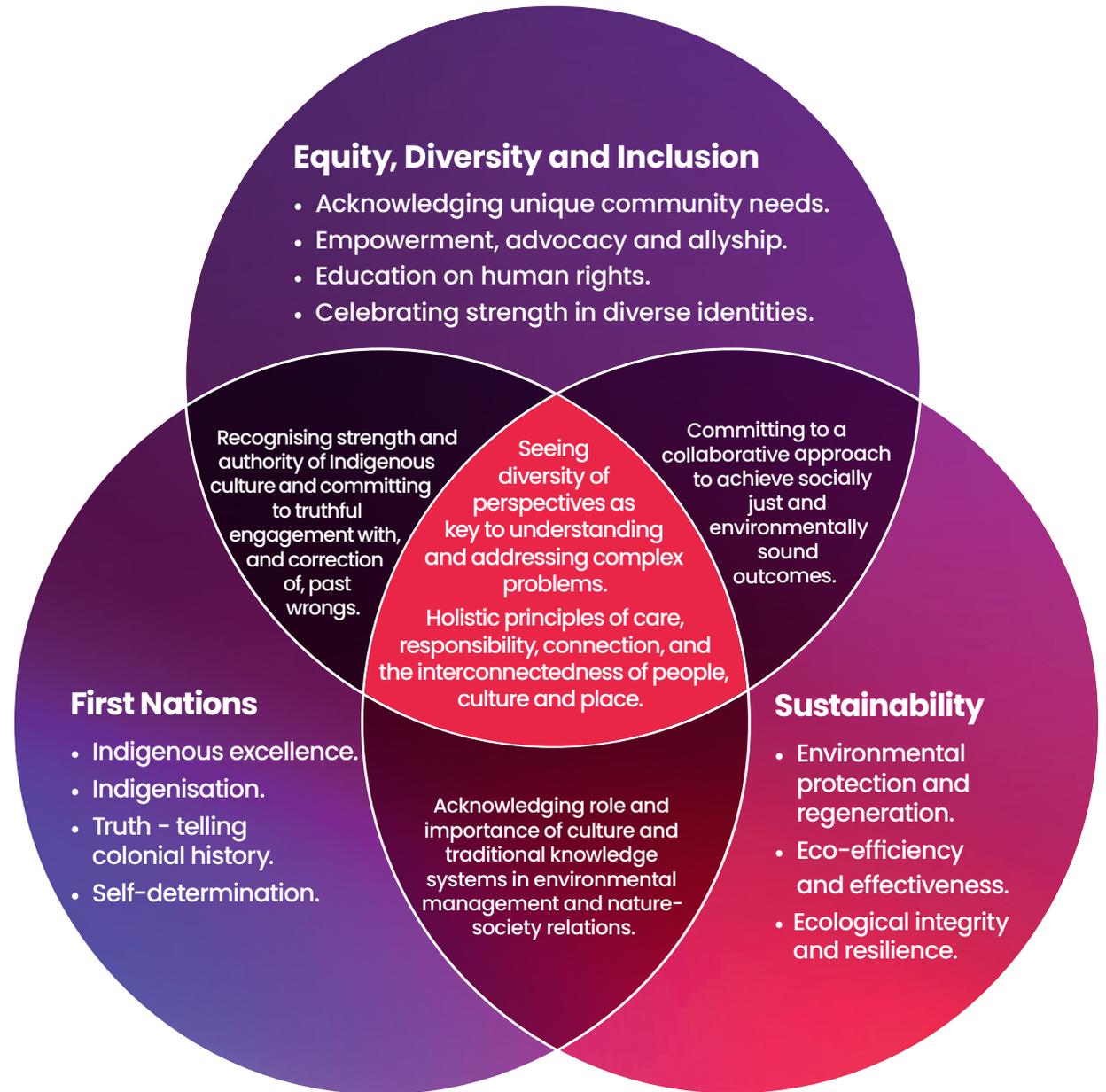
This can be fostered through community advisory groups, social networks, acknowledging key events, and visibility; it also acts a measure to evaluate the efficacy of equity actions for diverse community members.

All three aspects are important to achieving impactful transformation and a future that will consolidate and grow Murdoch's reputation as an organisation that values, supports, and celebrates diversity, in all forms.

Please also refer to the EDI Glossary for contextual definitions of key terms used in this sub strategy document.

Context and design

Ngala Kwop Biddi: Building a Brighter Future, Together, outlines a clear vision for Murdoch University that reclaims and emphasises our core values through three strategic themes: Sustainability, First Nations and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).





Connected through the holistic principles of compassion, competence, and care, the strategic pillars of Sustainability, First Nations and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are linked through a shared narrative that sees diversity of perspectives as key to understanding and addressing complex problems, and acknowledges the interconnectedness and interdependence of people, culture, and place.

While there is significant overlap, each strategic pillar has a unique vision, with specific strategic and operational responsibilities:

- First Nations focuses on Indigenisation, truth-telling, Indigenous excellence, and self-determination.
- Sustainability focuses on environmental protection and regeneration; eco-efficiency and effectiveness; and ecological integrity and resilience.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion focuses on acknowledging unique community needs; empowerment, advocacy and allyship; social justice and human rights, and celebrating strength in diversity.

Consultation and Development

Taking guidance from the University strategy, this sub-strategy was designed in response to codesign workshops with key stakeholders from education, research, and engagement at Murdoch.

The first draft was shared with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), the PVC First Nations, the PVC Sustainability, the Associate Deans EDI and Learning and Teaching, and the recently formed Advisory Groups for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual (LGBTIQA+), and Disability and Neurodiversity (DND), comprised of self-nominated students and staff.

The second draft embedded feedback from over 100 individuals, and this document was prepared for the Whole of University feedback and review stage.

The final draft was endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team and noted by the University Senate and Academic Council.



Implementation and Delivery

As a sub-strategy attached to Ngala Kwop Bididi, this strategic plan offers steps for the whole University so we can work together to achieve shared EDI objectives.

EDI is a collective responsibility. The small operational team in the Office of the PVC EDI will be focused on supporting all areas of the University to develop, implement and measure their own contextually relevant EDI objectives.

While the EDI Team plays a pivotal role in terms of driving, evaluating and reporting on progress towards the EDI sub-strategy, the delivery of this within the broader context of Ngala Kwop Bididi requires active engagement from every academic and business unit within our institution. Each area is encouraged to take ownership of EDI actions that align with their work portfolios, embedding EDI principles into everything we do.

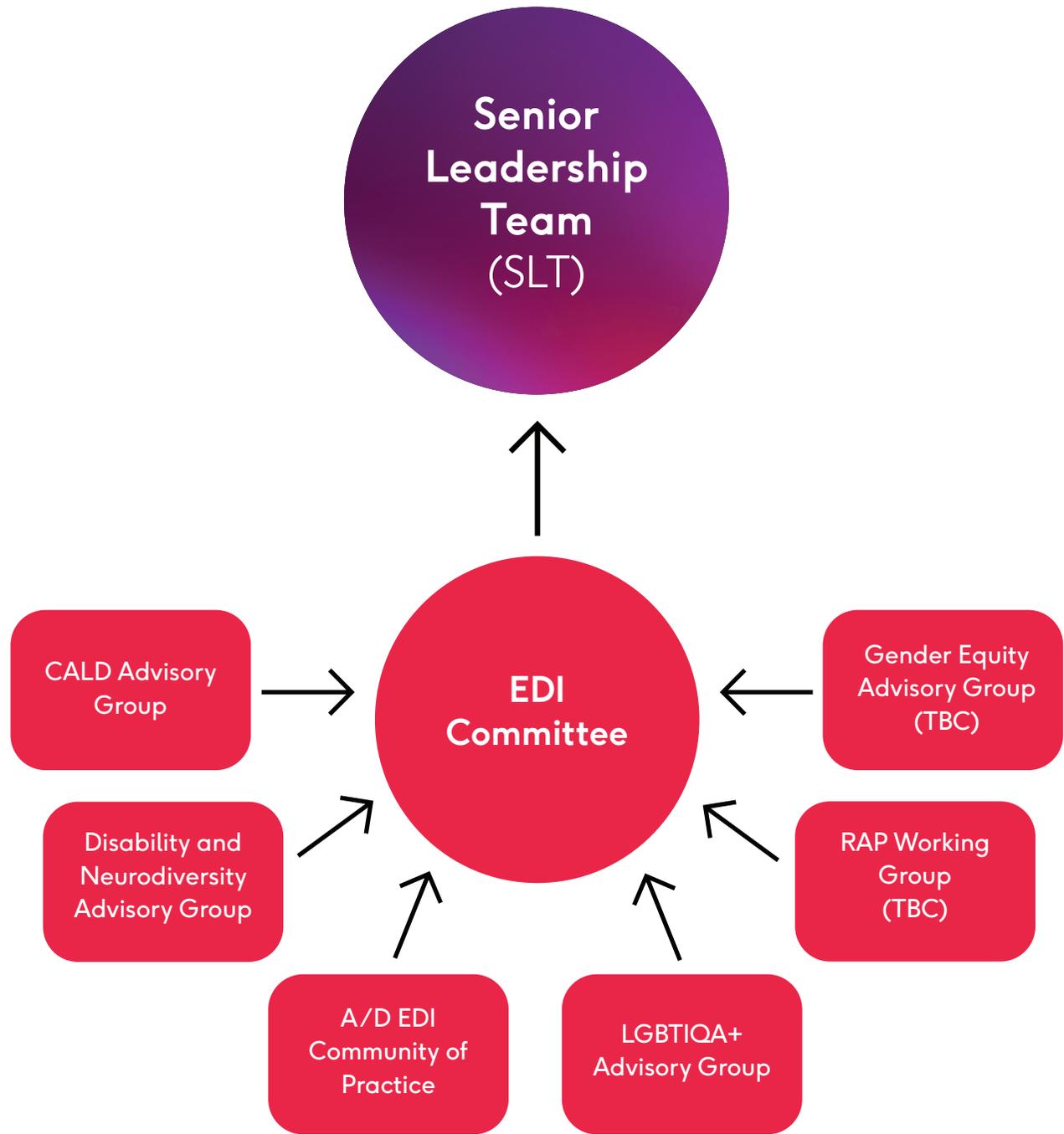


Governance and Reporting

The reporting structure for the EDI Sub-Strategy falls under the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), which directly reports to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

EDIC holds responsibility for overseeing various advisory groups, working groups, and communities of practice, including the Associate Deans of EDI Community of Practice, CALD Advisory Group, Disability and Neurodiversity Advisory Group, and LGBTIQ+ Advisory Group. Plans are underway to establish the RAP Working Group and Gender Equity Advisory Group.

This structured approach aims to provide oversight and coordination to drive impactful change university-wide.



Strategic *Objective*

The following road map is designed to lead Murdoch closer to its strategic EDI objective as outlined in Ngala Kwop Biddi:

Build a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community and environment which is equitable and safe, and which provides a culturally safe and supportive environment where all members of our community can realise their potential.





Priority stakeholder communities

EDI covers a vast range of equity groups and needs. The focus for the 2024–2030 sub-strategy is on raising the voice, value, and agency of the following stakeholder communities:

- First Nations Australians
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- People with disabilities and/or who are neurodiverse
- Members of the LGBTIQ+ community

These are priority diversity groups as outlined in the Public Sector Commission Strategy (2020–2025). Inclusion efforts for people from these backgrounds will intersect with Whole of University efforts to achieve gender equity, support students from low SES and rural and remote backgrounds, and counter age discrimination.

Key Priority Areas

The following EDI sub-strategy for Murdoch University is comprised of **seven Key Priority Areas (KPA)**, each of which is defined through a series of actions and associated measures of success to enable leaders, teams, and individuals, to align their work with the the objectives of Ngala Kwop Bididi.



Key Priority Areas (KPAs) were selected as appropriate measures for determining our EDI maturity, development, and impact for the following reasons:

1

Firstly, in the codesign workshops, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were not preferred measures, due to the complex, nuanced and multifaceted nature of EDI work.

For example, gender equity and diversity targets are likely to differ across Schools, Offices, and Departments and need to consider issues of intersectionality (e.g. race, ability, ethnicity) as well as gender identity.

2

Secondly, there is currently no reliable mechanism through which to collect baseline data that captures the breadth of diversity and intersectionality in our student and staff communities.

Therefore, we cannot yet differentiate inclusion metrics for all our diverse stakeholder communities. There is also nominal available data through which to determine the impact and outcomes of current EDI initiatives.

3

Finally, the KPA structure was modelled on the Athena Swan Silver Accreditation process, and the subsequent “actions” and “measures of success” metrics were selected through a process of benchmarking and review of EDI (or similar) strategic plans from universities across Australia.

The following seven KPAs serve as a foundational framework to guide our commitment to EDI and drive meaningful change within and beyond the University. The first five KPAs align with the EDI objectives in Ngala Kwop Bididi, and an additional two KPAs were formed in the codesign process.

The seven KPAs that frame Murdoch's 2024-2030 EDI sub-strategy, are as follows:

1. Further diversify our student and staff body.
2. Build a culturally safe and inclusive study and work environment.
3. Engage proactively in EDI initiatives regularly tracking and reporting on university commitments.
4. Develop/increase intercultural competency skills amongst students and staff.
5. Improve accessibility across campuses.
6. Develop and nurture an interdisciplinary community of practice for research and encourage projects to consider social impact.
7. Collaborate with external stakeholders to develop reciprocal EDI initiatives with impact beyond the University.



KPA 1:

Further diversify our *student and staff body*.

Actions

- 1.1.** Identify, develop, implement, and monitor a range of tools to collect student and staff diversity data to benchmark, and identify gaps and strengths in population diversity across University, Office, College, School, Discipline and Departmental levels.
- 1.2.** Implement inclusive and targeted recruitment strategies that actively seek a diverse pool of students and staff.
- 1.3.** Implement initiatives to promote retention of diverse staff, such as mentorship programs and leadership/career development opportunities.
- 1.4.** Develop and implement tailored student success initiatives to increase retention and success of students from diverse backgrounds.
- 1.5.** Seek relationships with community organisations to provide access to education for students from economically disadvantaged, rural, or remote backgrounds.
- 1.6.** Encourage and advocate for diversity in leadership and management roles across the University.

Measures of Success

- Ability to track and identify trends in representation of diverse groups across University, Office, College, School, and Directorate levels.
- Increased diversity in student and staff populations.
- Improved retention and career advancement for staff from diverse backgrounds.
- Improved retention, success, and graduation rates for students from diverse backgrounds.
- Increased engagement and enrolment of students from Low SES, rural, and remote backgrounds.
- Increased representation of diverse leaders and managers.

KPA 2:

Build a *culturally safe and inclusive study and work environment.*

Actions

- 2.1.** Collaborate closely with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) and establish Advisory Groups (AGs) with key EDI stakeholder communities on campus to advise on tailored cultural safety and inclusion needs.
- 2.2.** Create physical and virtual spaces designed to cater to the needs of diverse campus communities.
- 2.3.** Increase visibility for the culturally safe and inclusive practices at the University by initiating awareness campaigns that involves multiple communication channels and strategies.
- 2.4.** Increase opportunities for cross-cultural understanding on campus.
- 2.5.** Review and improve Murdoch's relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines to ensure they meet the standards of best practices in EDI.
- 2.6.** In collaboration with relevant stakeholders and decision-makers, review and revise students and staff grievance processes to ensure cultural and psychological safety of people making claims based on discrimination.
- 2.7.** Conduct regular curriculum reviews using curriculum mapping tool (in development) to ensure EDI concepts are included in the curriculum.
- 2.8.** Empower, encourage, and support Colleges and Schools to design inclusive curriculum, where applicable.

Measures of Success

- Evidence that EDIC and AGs recommendations are considered and implemented where possible.
- Active participation and positive feedback from members of diverse communities.
- Higher satisfaction and sense of belonging reported in staff and student survey data for members of diverse communities.
- Increased participation in cross-cultural understanding initiatives, attendance at multicultural events, and positive feedback.
- Regular reporting of policy, procedure and guideline updates to EDI and Senior Leadership Team.
- Enhanced participation and evidence of feeling safe and supported in making a discrimination-based claim.
- Reduced complaints and grievances related to discrimination, bias, and underrepresentation.
- Increased student satisfaction markers from members of diverse communities.

KPA 3:

Engage proactively in *EDI initiatives* regularly tracking and reporting on university commitments.

Actions

- 3.1.** Develop and implement an EDI training program, monitor attendance, and collect feedback to assess effectiveness.
- 3.2.** Expand the LGBTIQ+ Ally network program to other equity groups. Encourage staff and students to become allies and monitor growth and engagement.
- 3.3.** Join and/or engage with state and national accreditation bodies and organisations supporting best practice in EDI, such as Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP or equivalent), SAGE Athena Swan, Australian, Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), etc.”.
- 3.4.** Curate a program of key events centred around diverse communities and their annual days of significance.
- 3.5.** Create a reporting framework with established intervals evaluating university-wide EDI initiatives.

Measures of Success

- Growing training attendance, coupled with positive feedback in participant surveys.
- Evidence of strong ally participation in key events and initiatives for various groups.
- Achieving incremental awards in external EDI accreditation processes.
- Event delivery, including engagement, attendance, and feedback measures.
- Development of mechanism to clearly report EDI metrics to university leadership and governing bodies.
- Improved accuracy and quality of EDI reporting.

KPA 4:

Develop/increase *intercultural competency skills* amongst students and staff.

Actions

- 4.1.** Establish a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Advisory Group consisting of diverse members to regularly convene and offer guidance, expertise, and recommendations for improving intercultural competency skills.
- 4.2.** Embed foundational intercultural communication competence (ICC) skills into course materials and syllabi through collaboration with curriculum designers and academic staff.
- 4.3.** Offer and significantly increase training opportunities in intercultural competence skills by increasing the availability of sessions and tracking participation rates.
- 4.4.** Develop and implement self-assessment tool(s) to identify unconscious biases, while monitoring its utilisation and the number of completed assessments.
- 4.5.** Develop and implement tools that prompt critical self-reflection on individuals' cultural competency, while monitoring their utilisation and the number of completed assessments.

Measures of Success

- Evidence that Advisory Group recommendations are considered and implemented where possible.
- Increased presence of ICC skills in curriculum over time.
- Increased participation rate and positive feedback on ICC training programs.
- Increased frequency of staff using the self-assessment tool and evidence of staff proactively addressing identified biases through various strategies and projects.
- Increased student engagement in intercultural relationship development activities.

KPA 5:

Improve *accessibility* across campuses.

Actions

- 5.1.** Establish a Disability and Neurodiversity Advisory Group consisting of diverse members to regularly convene and offer guidance, expertise, and recommendations for improving accessibility across campus.
- 5.2.** Implement UDL principles in curriculum design, ensuring that all educational materials and methods are accessible to diverse learners.
- 5.3.** Encourage teams across the University to develop plans for increasing accessibility for their staff and/or students and develop metrics to monitor progress.
- 5.4.** Invest in and promote accessible digital platforms, ensuring that websites, software, and communication tools are usable by all.
- 5.5.** Establish and report on accessibility plans for both physical and virtual campus spaces as required by government and/or accreditation bodies.
- 5.6.** Develop and offer an Accessibility Awareness Toolkit that provides resources and guidelines for the University community.
- 5.7.** Update campus services, such as maps and apps, to include dedicated accessibility features catering to people living with disabilities.

Measures of Success

- Evidence that Advisory Group recommendations are considered and implemented where possible.
- Increased adoption of UDL in courses and tracked improvements in student performance and engagement.
- Increased staff participation in internal accessibility trainings.
- Improved accessibility of digital platforms and maps along with positive feedback from users.
- Progress in University and Team level action plans and improvements in accessibility metrics such as evidence of decreased barriers and increased inclusivity.
- Enhanced utilisation of the Accessibility Awareness Toolkit.
- Updated campus services with incorporated accessibility features tailored to the needs of people living with disabilities.

KPA 6:

Develop and nurture an *interdisciplinary community of practice* for research and encourage projects to consider *social impact*.

Actions

- 6.1.** Encourage areas across the University to collaborate on research initiatives to foster a culture of interdisciplinary research.
- 6.2.** Identify and disseminate established tools to researchers to enable reflection on social impact of their research.
- 6.3.** Implement strategies to recognise, celebrate and showcase research contributions that advance understanding of societal inequalities and drive positive change.
- 6.4.** Identify and implement strategies to promote active participation by equity groups in research activities.

Measures of Success

- Increased participation in and visibility of interdisciplinary research projects across the University.
- Growing engagement in use of social impact assessment tools amongst the University's research community.
- Increased recognition and higher visibility of research contributions that aim to advance understanding of societal inequalities and drive positive change.
- Enhanced visibility, recognition, and promotion of researchers from one or more equity groups.

KPA 7:

Collaborate with external stakeholders to develop *reciprocal EDI initiatives* with impact beyond the University.

Actions

- 7.1.** Establish partnerships with government agencies, industry partners, community organisations and NGOs.
- 7.2.** Promote knowledge exchange with external stakeholders to exchange insights, data, and best practices to foster sustainable EDI initiatives.
- 7.3.** Facilitate networking opportunities between the University and external stakeholders to enable mutually beneficial EDI initiatives.
- 7.4.** Explore opportunities to engage with businesses and organisations to invest in projects that advance social equity and diversity.

Measures of Success

- Successfully established partnerships with government agencies, industry partners, community organisations, and NGOs.
- Evidence of successful implementation of EDI initiatives in partnership with external stakeholders.
- Number of networking opportunities created and the level of engagement between the University and external stakeholders.
- Number of successful engagements with businesses and organisations for EDI projects and positive responses through feedback surveys.

Glossary of *Terms*

Accessibility: actions providing equitable access to everyone along the spectrum of human ability and experience, with a specific focus on disability, and can include modifications to physical spaces, teaching environments, digital products, teaching resources, in person events, and language used by people.

Age: a factor of a person's identity that may lead to them being treated less favourably than others in a comparable scenario on the bases that they are too young or too old.

Allyship or Ally: the practice of an individual actively supporting and advocating for a marginalised or underrepresented group without being a member of that group. Ally refers to a person who practices allyship principles.

CALD: acronym for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.

Community: our community includes academic and professional staff and students, as well as contractors, alumni, employers for WIL programs, at all levels and roles, small and large.

Disability: refers to an umbrella term that encompasses various impairments of body function or structure, activity limitations, and/or participation restrictions. It includes a wide range of conditions, including physical, intellectual, sensory, psychiatric and mental health, neurological, and learning disabilities. Disabilities can be permanent or temporary, and may result from various factors, such as congenital conditions, accidents, or health-related issues.

Discrimination: the Australian Human Rights commission defines discrimination as when, "a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. It is also discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share. This is known as 'indirect discrimination.'"

Diversity: the population demographics; the presence of a wide range of identities, backgrounds, and perspectives across the University.

EDI: acronym for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Equality: providing each individual or group of people the same resources or opportunities.

Equity: recognising that each person has different circumstances and allocating the proportionate resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome, often referred to in the context of equity groups; The explicit actions and support structures which ensure all members of the community can realise their potential.

Equity groups: specific demographic or social groups that have historically experienced disadvantages or inequalities including First Nations peoples, people living with disabilities, gender diverse people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, first-generation students, Low SES individuals, and rural and remote communities.

Gender Diverse: an inclusive concept that encompasses a broad spectrum of gender identities beyond the traditional binary categories of male and female.

Inclusion: creating an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel valued, respected, and included in decision-making processes; the sense of belonging, safety, empowerment, and agency for members of diverse groups in the community.

Intercultural competency skills: in this document, intercultural competency skills refer to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately across different cultures. The term “intercultural” suggests an ability to go between or among cultures, while “competence” suggests the ability to be effective and appropriate.

Intersectionality: coined by academic Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is the ways in which different aspects of a person’s identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

LGBTIQA+: acronym for people of diverse sexes, sexualities and genders, including but not limited to: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual/Aromantic and other diverse identities encapsulated in the ‘+’.

Neurodiversity: a term to describe the different ways that individual’s brains experience and interact with their environment, often referred to in the context of Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, and other neurological differences.

Universal Design for Learning or UDL: a framework for teaching that guides the design of learning experiences to proactively meet the needs of all learners, making modifications to teaching environments and format to proactively include students, rather than adapting after a student experiences a barrier to learning.



This sub-strategy provides a roadmap for cultivating equity, diversity, and inclusion across all areas of university business, with a focus on articulating how this can be achieved for each of our core activities: education, engagement, and research.

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