

Maintaining a human focus while achieving our industrial objectives

Nulloo Yumbah's Submission

What is the University saying?

Since the inception of strategies to support Indigenous education in 1985, CQU, (formerly UCCQ and CIAE), has documented its commitment to Indigenous education. The primary document that contained such a commitment was the CQU Indigenous Education Strategy. This document was a DETYA requirement of the university whereby on an annual basis it was/is compulsory for CQU to make explicit its commitment to support and enhance Indigenous education.

The CQU's Indigenous Education Strategies for 1999 and 2000, CQU Objective section, contain very much the same rhetoric, (even to the extent of using the same words for each year). The following is the CQU Objective section. (This section is prepared by the university with all other sections of the document prepared by Nulloo Yumbah)

"Whilst developing its national and international roles, Central Queensland University emphasises working in partnership with the culturally, economically and educationally diverse Central Queensland region. In recognition of the substantial Indigenous population within this diverse region, CQU's Vision Statement explicitly identifies the University's commitment to Indigenous education.

". . . a commitment to continue proactive roles in promoting high standards in Indigenous and international education, distance education, flexible learning, innovative teaching and quality research."

Responding to Indigenous higher education needs through developing a more inclusive culture within the university is embedded in the following strategic priority contained in CQU's Statement of Strategic Intent 1999-2003.

"Enhance cross cultural awareness and the understanding of Indigenous perspectives throughout all sections of the university community and integrate this awareness and understanding into the conduct and support of teaching, research and community service."

CQU aims to improve higher education opportunities for Indigenous people and to improve the awareness and understanding of their educational needs amongst the University community as a whole, and to promote and communicate Indigenous knowledge as a means of achieving both these aims. Its Indigenous Education support unit, the former Capricornia Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Education Centre (CAITEC), has been re-oriented and re-developed as Nulloo Yumbah, a place of Indigenous learning. Nulloo Yumbah has taken on a more inclusive role in supporting Indigenous participation in higher education, fostering learning within an appropriate cultural context."

As can be seen within the above extract CQU's Vision Statement also indicates its support for promoting high standards in Indigenous education.

The CQU Teaching and Learning Implementation Plan also includes strategies to support and enhance Indigenous education through the development of bridging programs and Indigenous perspectives into curriculum.

The CQU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy is another recent strategy implemented by CQU to increase the number of Indigenous employees at CQU.

What is the reality?

Nulloo Yumbah receives on an annual basis the projected amount for Indigenous Support Funds from DETYA's Indigenous Higher Education portfolio. These funds are transferred via CQU directly to Nulloo Yumbah's operating account. The university offers no additional funds to the DETYA grant.

Regardless of what it says it's committed to, (stated in its Vision Statement, its Indigenous Education Strategy, its Teaching and Learning Implementation Plan and the CQU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy), CQU does not in reality support Indigenous people and their education.

For example, there has never been an ongoing commitment to subsidise the operations of Nulloo Yumbah even though on paper Nulloo Yumbah is expected to recruit and support students, engage in research, develop and deliver teaching programs and service the Indigenous community. Whenever Nulloo Yumbah has tried to negotiate with CQU Senior Management about additional financial

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support the response is that the DETYA allocation should be sufficient and that the university can not afford additional funds. This response implies that it is Nulloo Yumbah's problem and if there aren't additional funds, a decrease in staffing and operations must take effect. Given this situation Nulloo Yumbah finds it impossible to achieve the expectations of the university and community. Thus often resulting in being criticised for not delivering and confirming racist stereotypes about Aboriginal people not being able to succeed.

However, CQU too often holds up Nulloo Yumbah as its shining example of how good they are in relation to fostering excellence in Indigenous Education. For example, each year CQU makes a submission to the Good Universities Guide about Indigenous participation at CQU. Each year CQU rates very highly in this respect but it is not necessarily a reflection of what CQU does in relation to Indigenous education and participation, it is what Nulloo Yumbah does with the minimal funds it receives from DETYA and the hard work of its dedicated staff, (most of whom are on short term contracts that have been rolled over year after year).

What are the issues for CQU/NTEU

- To translate CQU's rhetoric to reality by recurrently subsidising the Indigenous Support Funding allocation from DETYA.
- To implement policies that ensure that Indigenous peoples' knowledge is incorporated into curriculum and funded accordingly.
- To ensure that Indigenous staff are given job security and the opportunity for permanency.
- To ensure that the university actively recruits Indigenous people to work at CQU. (Maybe designate identified positions)
- To ensure that the physical environment of CQU reflects the traditional homelands of the Darumbal people.
- To include Indigenous peoples aspirations and rights in the strategic direction and management of CQU.