

# Largest ever cohort of Indigenous students graduate at Southern Cross University

SOUTHERN Cross University had its largest ever cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students graduate this April, with 60 Indigenous students becoming proud alumni.

A third of the graduates were from nursing and allied health degrees, with others having studied courses such as education, law, business, arts, science, social work, Indigenous knowledge and psychology.

Among them was Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge graduate Keyarrah Sweetwater-Delauney.

Keyarrah is the third generation of her family to graduate from the University, which has the third highest proportion of Indigenous students in the country.

"This has been the most challenging and transformative journey of my life. I'm proud of what I've achieved and deeply grateful for the opportunities that have come from studying a Bachelor's degree. This experience has shaped who I am today and opened doors I never imagined possible," Keyarrah said.

"Both my mum and my Nan came to watch me graduate. It meant the world to have them there with me."

Keyarrah entered university through the Preparing for Success Program, a pathway program that develops academic skills, before enrolling in her Bachelor degree. During her studies, she received support from her tutors through the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS), passing with flying colours.

"University was so much more than I expected. Throughout the course I had so many meaningful experiences with Elders, Indigenous academics and

with cultural events at Gnibi. It was a special time in my life that I will never forget," she said.

"I'm interested in pursuing postgraduate studies. I'm passionate about Nation building and committed to creating opportunities that centre Indigenous strengths and knowledge systems in everything I do."

Also graduating from the Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge was Anthony Hack, who received support from ITAS during his degree and has become an ITAS tutor himself.

"I'm really proud to graduate. This is my third attempt at a degree and it's taken me a lot of years to complete part-time. There were times where I thought I might not be able to continue, trying to juggle study with full-time work and parenting responsibilities, but I'm very happy I persisted and achieved this goal," he said.

"The course itself is amazing. It's very well-done and well-informed, with lots of involvement from local Elders. I am a Jaadwa man and my last assignment was a research project about our traditional ball game of Marn Grook, and I'm now considering postgraduate study to expand this research which would be important for my mob."

Acting Dean Professor Thomas Roche said Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples is committed to delivering culturally-safe, quality study experiences.

"Our scholarship and teaching is informed by the knowledge, needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our programs, including the Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge, are designed to support

students in their academic journey, offering a unique blend of traditional knowledge and contemporary education," he said.

Course Coordinator for the Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge, Dr Kylie Day, said the graduation ceremony was a powerful reflection of perseverance, cultural pride and community strength.

"Graduation is such an excellent way to honour the long road of study our students have travelled, often while juggling work, family and community responsibilities. 'Education is the key' is a phrase our Elders often remind us of, and this cohort is a living testament to that wisdom," Dr Day said.

Manager of Indigenous Australian Student Services (IASS) at Southern Cross Anthony Olive said it was a proud moment to see the large cohort of students complete their studies.

"Many people think they can't do university but they often just need a bit of extra support to get going and build their confidence," Mr Olive said.

"We provide culturally-safe social and academic spaces at all campuses which includes computer labs and free printing, study and tutoring support, and Indigenous staff who provide a range of academic, social and emotional support services backed by our Indigenous Elders Council at Southern Cross.

"We have more than 700 Indigenous students which is something that we are proud of. Students can see that the culture is strong at the University and this is emphasised by this incredible cohort of graduates. I wish them all the best for the future."



Southern Cross University Indigenous graduates at one of five Graduation Ceremonies held at the Gold Coast on April 15-16, 2025



Southern Cross University Chancellor Sandra McPhee AM with third generation graduate Keyarrah Sweetwater-Delauney, alongside proud family and SCU alumni Carol and Tanietta Delauney



There has never been a better time to study

At Southern Cross University we understand that Indigenous knowledge is always current. We embrace being part of a community offering the best student support, steeped in the traditions of care, and are one of the top universities in Australia for Indigenous students. This year 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students graduated across all Faculties/Colleges.

With full-time, part-time and pathway options, Uni in July at Southern Cross University is made for you. You can study in bite-sized pieces and find the perfect balance between work, life and study.

Starting in July:

Degrees in Indigenous Knowledge, Healthcare, Business, Law, Science and Education.



CRICOS Provider: 01241G  
TEQSA Provider Code: PRV12043 Australian University

Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge graduates  
Anthony Hack and Keyarrah Sweetwater-Delauney

UNI IN JULY