

Director, First Nations Leadership

Fixed term, full time appointment (5 years)
Senior Staff Contract
Casuarina Campus

Step into a pivotal leadership role as Director, First Nations at Charles Darwin University, where you'll champion innovative strategies that honour and embed Australian First Nations knowledges across every facet of the University. If you're ready to inspire change, foster inclusion, and leave a lasting legacy in Australian higher education, this is your opportunity to make a real impact at the executive level.


About the Position

As the Director, First Nations Leadership at Charles Darwin University, you will provide strategic leadership to advance the University's goal of being the most recognised institution for Australian First Nations training, education, and research. You will drive the development and implementation of culturally-enriched programs, embeds First Nations knowledges and perspectives across teaching, research, and governance, and foster strong partnerships with First Nations communities, staff, and students. Additionally, you will oversee a dedicated team, and collaborate with University leadership and external partners to improve First Nations student and staff participation, success, and cultural safety, ensuring all initiatives align with CDU's strategic vision and enduring commitment to honouring First Nations cultures.

About You

To be successful, you will:

- Maintain a research-informed and working knowledge based on best-practice in First Nations tertiary student success as relevant to the Australian context;
- Lead the Gurinbey and Akaltje First Nations Students centres (that operate from the Casuarina and Alice Springs campuses respectively) to deliver programs and services to Australian First Nations students undertaking TAFE, Higher Education (HE) and higher degree by research (HDR) programs including the effective management of recruitment, induction, performance management, mentoring, training and development of portfolio staff;
- Collaborate with CDU senior staff to embed First Nations perspectives into the University's core business areas, and to embed First Nations knowledges into curricula and community-based learning and to expand related research to promote the socio-cultural and socio-economic development of First Nations peoples;
- Support the Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement (DVCFNL&E) in leading the University's strategy to ensure all staff achieve an appropriate level of cultural competence when working with Australia's First Nations peoples.
- Work closely with the DVCFNL&E to enhance key relationships between the University and internal and external First Nations stakeholders through culturally appropriate engagement and communications.
- Contribute to organisational strategic direction and lead the operational planning and delivery of cross-University initiatives that support the University's goal to 'be the most recognised university for Australian First Nations training, education and research'.
- Assist the DVCFNL&E in the management of significant Institutional partnerships and provide advice to senior staff on issues and opportunities.
- Support the DVCFNL&E in establishing and maintaining effective governance structures for the First Nations Leadership portfolio, including strategic committees, working groups, and decision-making processes.
- Oversee the development and tracking of measurable strategic and operational metrics and/or KPIs related to the success and engagement of First Nations students and staff

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- Chair relevant First Nations Governance committees and or attend broader University governance committees as the DVCFNLE's representative or observer as required.
 - Work with colleagues and the First Nations Workforce Advisory Committee to contribute to the University-wide development and continuous improvement of strategy and policy in First Nations people management and the University's approach to recruitment, development and retention of First Nations staff, including succession planning.
 - Represent the DVCFNLE on internal and external engagements as required.
 - Provide leadership in the effective and accountable use of resources, ensuring compliance with University policies and the requirements of externally funded programs—such as the Away from Base (AFB) Program, Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) and donor-funded initiatives—while supporting Indigenous governance and decision-making in line with the ISSP guidelines.
 - Collaborate with the DVCFNLE in the development, implementation and review of the University's quality assurance framework relevant to the First Nations Leadership & Engagement portfolio as required by relevant external agencies.
 - Support the DVCFNLE to manage and coordinate the University's preparation for, and response to, relevant external reviews and audits as required.

To view the full position description please click the apply link to be directed to the vacancy on our CDU job site and then click on job attachments.

This is an identified position and is only open to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants, in accordance with CDU's commitment to increasing First Nations representation and as permitted under Section 14 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1992 (NT). Applicants will be required to provide a Confirmation of Aboriginality, to prove their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage as part of the recruitment process.

For information on First Nations Recruitment at CDU, please visit

<https://www.cdu.edu.au/first-nations-leadership/first-nations-pathways-engagement>

What's in it for you?

- An employer who values your contribution to building a bigger, better and stronger University
- Work with a University committed to changing people's lives for the better through training, education and research
- Opportunities for professional development, paid study and career progression
- An enviable lifestyle in the spectacular Northern Territory
- Up to 26 weeks of paid parental leave (primary care giver), in addition to government payments (eligibility criteria apply)
- Recognition of prior service with another Australian university / NT Government for Long Service Leave (recognition applied to qualifying period only)
- Ability to negotiate transfer of leave entitlements under the Public Employment (Mobility) Act 1989
- Free on-campus parking in designated areas
- Employee Assistance Program
- Salary Packaging opportunities

How to Apply

All applications must be received online '**here**' (via SEEK) and should include your resume, a cover letter outlining your interest in the role and relevant skills and experience, and a separate document addressing the selection criteria of the role.

For a confidential discussion about the position please contact Professor Ruth Wallace on 08 8946 6390 or email ruth.wallace@cdu.edu.au

Adjustments can be made throughout the application and selection process, as well as during employment to support applicants and employees with disability. CDU's Workplace Adjustment Policy and Procedure can be found at <https://policies.cdu.edu.au/view-current.php?id=191&version=1>. If you would like to discuss adjustments, please contact the People Services Team on 08 8946 6284 or email peopleservices@cdu.edu.au.

Diversity and Inclusion

At CDU we actively celebrate our diversity. We innovate, embrace new ideas, and act with courage and kindness. We're about what we can give to the world rather than what we take, and we believe in the transformative power of education. We work hard to make sure every member of our University community feels they truly belong. Understanding that it is through our focus on our people and leveraging our differences that will make CDU the most connected University in Australia, we are striving to ensure that our culture and our community are inclusive of all our staff, students, and visitors. We are committed to maintaining a culture where everyone feels respected, safe, encouraged to speak up and supported in achieving their professional goals. Applications from First Nations people, women at all levels, culturally and racially marginalised people, people with disability, neurotypical and neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ people, people with family and caring responsibilities and people at all stages of their careers are welcomed.

You make CDU. And we want you to be exactly who you are.

Applications Close: Wednesday 9th July 2025