



Aboriginal Pathway Program: Emerging leaders in our communities

Through their artwork, Ngarrindjeri artist Tiarnie Edwards provides a voice for their beliefs, their world, and their people. The Ngarrindjeri are the Traditional Owners of the Lower Lakes, Murray Mouth and Coorong and along the River Murray as far north as Mannum.

As one of many emerging leaders in communities across South Australia, Edwards shows what's possible when you make the most of an opportunity.

For Edwards, that opportunity was the University of South Australia's (UniSA) Aboriginal Pathway Program (APP), taking them on a 4-year journey to graduate from UniSA's Bachelor of Contemporary Art.

The APP is a one-and-a-half-year program designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students embrace university study. Students are free to apply without standard university entry requirements or an ATAR. The APP is taught in five locations across SA – Adelaide, Ceduna, Mt Gambier, Pt Lincoln, and Whyalla.

Students who successfully complete the APP can transfer into any degree at UniSA either in-person or online. Studying at UniSA's Port Lincoln Campus, Edwards says the APP laid the foundations for their success in the contemporary arts degree, boosting their confidence and introducing them to a community of like-minded ambitious people.

"The APP gave me a place to feel as though I belonged in academia again. Each tutor, lecturer and fellow student held each other up and pushed one another forward," Edwards says.

Earlier in the year, Edwards was recognised at the 2024 Helpmann Academy Graduate Exhibition awards for their installation, *Outlaws*, inspired by the diverse and complex identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the contemporary Australian landscape.

"I hope to make sure my beliefs are loud and clearly



Tiarnie Edwards

reflected in my art ... all I really want is to reflect the world and people around me, to make sure they are heard and make myself heard alongside them."

A testament to the APP impact on emerging leadership in communities, Edwards is one of many past and present APP students showing their leadership qualities.

In March, three former and current students (Rebecca Miller, Dharma Ducasse-Singer, Danielle Smith) were among the historic, first elected representatives for the SA First Nations Voice to Parliament.

More recently, five current and former APP students

(Danielle Smith, Fiona Dargin, Trae Richardson, Amie Brant, Andrea Richards) received 2024 NAIDOC Awards which recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions and excellence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

APP Director Dr Nazz Oldham says the APP's focus is on preparing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to succeed at university and is extremely proud of the impact APP students are having in their communities.

"The APP provides a culturally safe and supportive environment to build the necessary academic, literacy and numeracy skills to prepare students for their undergraduate degrees," he says.

Through the APP, students can develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to set them up for success in their future studies and beyond.

For more information, visit unisa.edu.au/app or email app@unisa.edu.au.



Some of the pieces in the *Outlaws* installation

UniSA's ABORIGINAL PATHWAY PROGRAM

Our unique, fee-free* program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students could be your pathway to university.

Build your skills and confidence for undergraduate study in 18 months. Benefit from a supportive and welcoming environment with mentoring, small class sizes, and in-person or online study options.

Available in Adelaide, Ceduna, Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln, and Whyalla. Access accommodation and travel support, and our Wurringka Student Services while you study.

Unleash your unstoppable career with UniSA.

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*Students are not charged course fees but may be required to pay Student Services & Amenities fees as determined by the Australian Government.



University of
South Australia



Danielle Smith,
Aboriginal Pathway
Program Completer

