

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

BRILLIANT TOGETHER

**Cultural Inclusion and Racial
Equality Plan 2023 – 2026**



Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/YUgarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).



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VICE-CHANCELLOR'S FOREWORD

Victoria University is one of the most diverse universities in Australia. Students, staff, alumni and partners come here to be part of a movement of excellence, contemporary thinking, creativity and innovation – and also to belong.

In our *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2028: Start well, finish brilliantly*, we have committed to Protecting Country and to progressive inclusivity.

Our words set the stage, but our actions set the agenda. This plan – *Brilliant Together* – sets out how we do the work to create a university that values everyone and their pursuit of success.

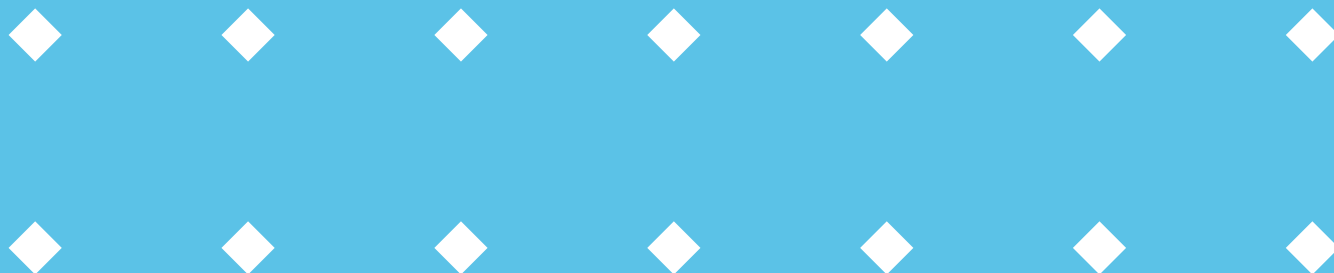
Importantly, *Brilliant Together* aligns the University with work being undertaken by Victoria's Anti-Racism Taskforce and is in accord with the **All One Together** Campaign for which VU is a signatory. I am beyond proud to be an ambassador for this.

The plan connects our enterprise and our activism with key partner organisations who are working to end racism and links strongly with VU's significant expertise in the social justice and anti-racism research space. It is truly emblematic of why VU is a pilot university for the new national Welcoming Universities benchmark.



Professor Adam Shoemaker
Vice-Chancellor and President

Brilliant Together promotes cultural inclusion at every level. It recognises the value of lifting up every individual for the entire community's benefit – the key to a thriving Victoria University.





HOW ARE WE BRILLIANT TOGETHER?

This land now known as Australia has been home for thousands of years to around 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, each with their own customs, language, culture and communities. Australia is a country rich in both ancient and contemporary human culture – a place to welcome and celebrate people of all cultures, ethnicities, from all places, of many language and faiths.

In the 2021 Census, nearly 70% of Australians identified as culturally diverse, making non Anglo-Celtic people a majority. Despite our culturally diverse population, many people in Australia still experience racist attitudes, discrimination and harassment.

VU is already hugely diverse. Over 69% of our students were born overseas. Anecdotally we know that many of our staff speak languages in addition to English and represent many cultural backgrounds. This wealth of experiences, languages, knowledge and capacity in terms of global reach is one of the most valuable assets of our VU community. Still, we know we can do better to elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people of colour and the many staff and students from diverse cultures. We can do better to connect people and ideas and to ensure that our diversity is represented at all levels of our organisation.

VU is on a path to decolonizing our university and this will call on all of us to listen, open ourselves to different ways of doing things and to deeply respect one another. Every one of us can contribute to making our country a welcoming and equitable place. The results will be transformative if we approach the work with commitment and courage.



THE CO-CREATION MODEL FOR BRILLIANT TOGETHER

The *Brilliant Together: VU Cultural Inclusion and Racial Equality Plan* was co-created by the VU Cultural Inclusion network of staff and students over a period of twelve months. The network operates as a community of practice. Membership is open to anyone from the VU community and all decisions are negotiated and agreed with the group.

As the network began to shape and develop this plan, some big conversations arose about the assumptions of how we do things. Exploring how to work in a decolonizing practice came up as did questions about how to find new departure points that aren't always centred on an English speaking and Eurocentric basis. Our staff and student network very mindfully articulated the problem

of 'othering' as 'culturally diverse' any peoples of descent other than Anglo-Celtic and also the problems with placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a 'culturally diverse' category.

Finding ways to centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives as well of those of people of colour and who speak languages other than English is an important pillar of this plan.

This plan acknowledges the sovereignty and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and communities at VU. The plan does not seek to impose actions on First Nations Peoples – rather to lend solidarity and support where that is needed and wanted.

Brilliant Together articulates ways for the whole VU community to contribute to racial justice and equality so that we can all belong to this thriving place to study and work, and share in its success.



CONTEXT AND ALIGNMENT

***Brilliant Together* has been created with a view to strengthening and enacting the aims of the new VU Anti-Racism policy and aligns the university with federal and state legislation including the Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 and Equal Opportunity Act 2010 as well as the Federal Race Discrimination Act 1975.**

The Victorian Government has committed to develop a new state-wide Anti-Racism Strategy, to proactively prevent and address racism in Victoria, and this plan places VU in a position to meet new state requirements and legislation.

In addition, *Brilliant Together* positions VU as a university of choice for international students under the new 'Welcoming Universities' national benchmark.



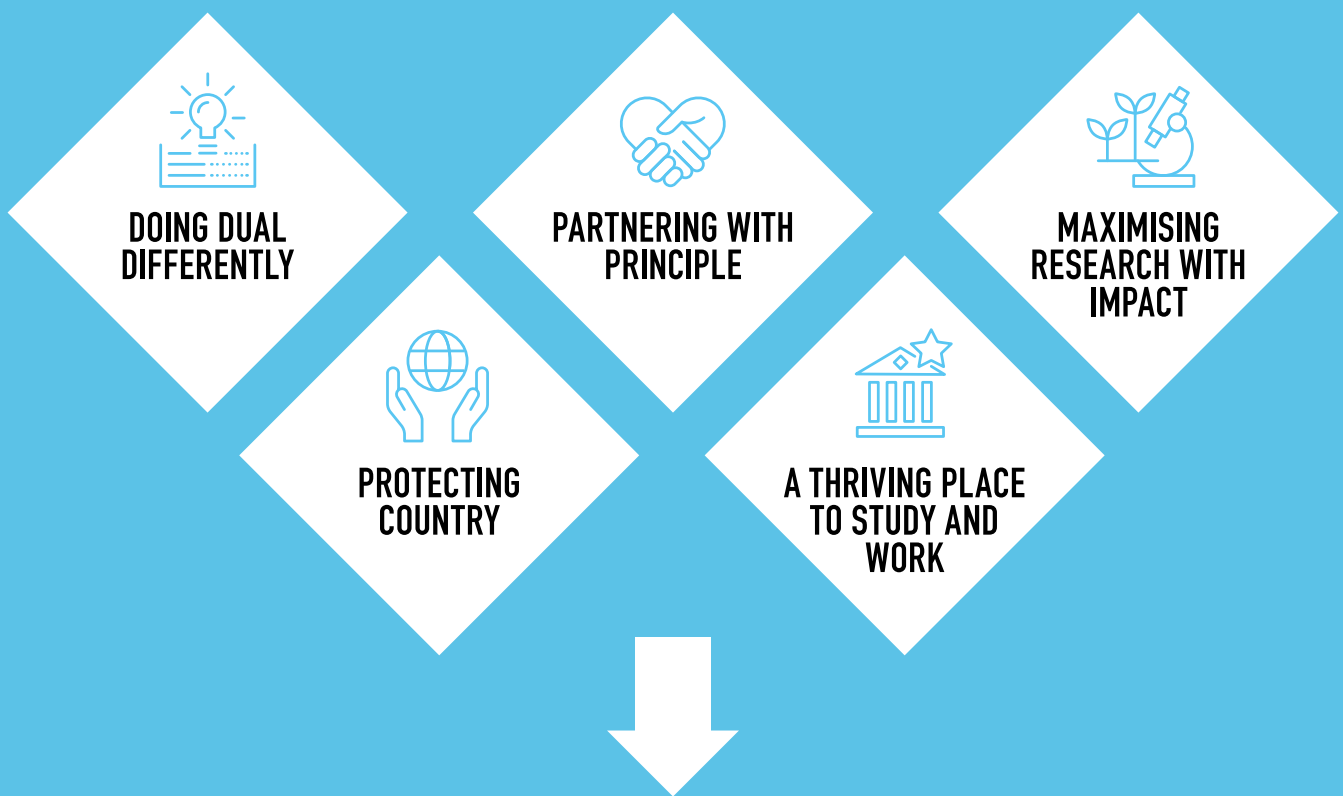
STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic Plan 2022 – 2028:
Start well, finish brilliantly

OUR VISION:

To be a global leader in dual-sector learning and research by 2028

OUR STRATEGIC DRIVERS:



OUR COMMITMENT TO PROGRESSIVE INCLUSIVITY:

Gender Equity Action Plan
2022 – 2025

Moondani Balluk Plan
2022 – 2025

Brilliant Together:
**Cultural Inclusion and
Racial Equality Plan**
2023 – 2026

HIGH-LEVEL OBJECTIVES



Doing Dual Differently

Commit to national benchmarks and to leading nationally for First Nations and culturally inclusive teaching and learning, delivering learning matched to lives.



Partnering with Principle

Connect and collaborate with First Nations and diverse communities using best practice principles of equality and exchange to cement VU as a place where people have agency and belong.



Maximising Research with Impact

Align with national cultural inclusion research standards to grow our research impact in relation to community outcomes through increased representation of First Nations and diverse research voices.



Protecting Country

Articulate a transformative change agenda that enables the VU community to be aware, informed and engaged in ensuring every facet of our institution reflects our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

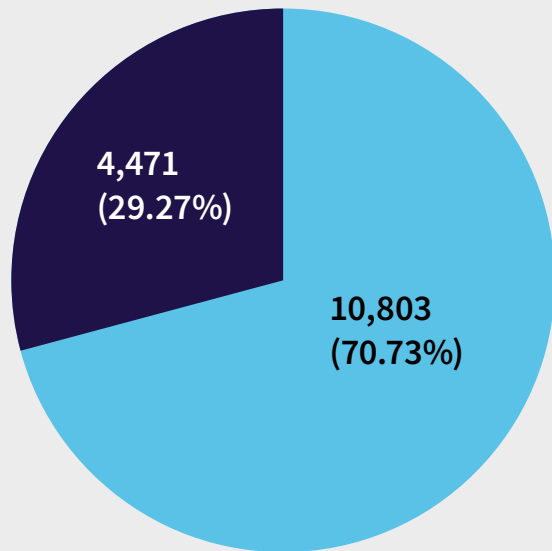


A Thriving Place to Study and Work

Create and share spaces that are inclusive, safe and welcoming to support and empower people of all backgrounds to thrive, feel pride and have a sense of belonging.

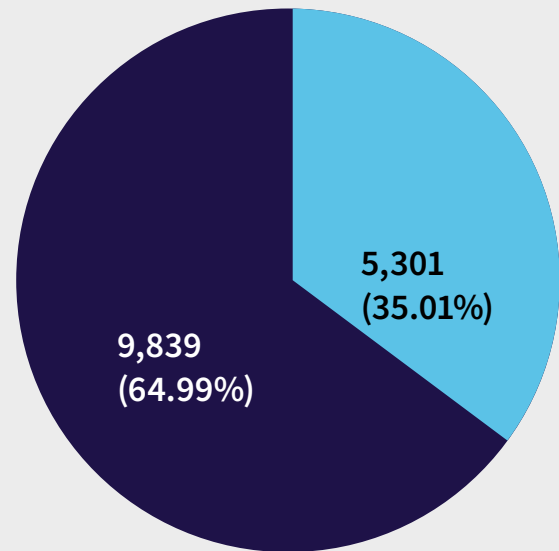
CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT VU

Students Born Overseas



■ Born Overseas
■ Australian Born

Students with a Non-English Speaking Background



■ Non-English Speaking
■ Speaks English Only

Language NESB Indicator

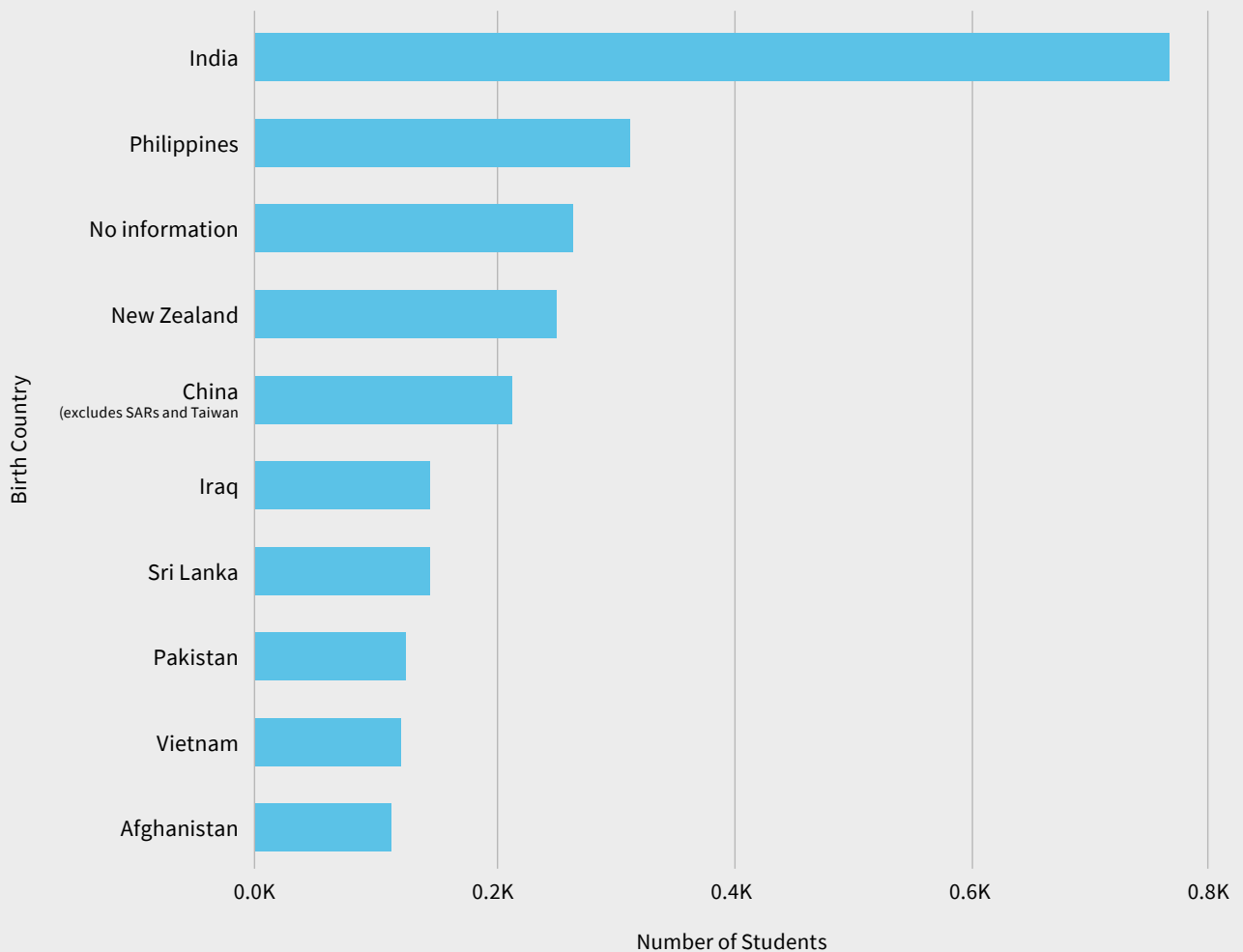
Top Languages

- ◆ English only
- ◆ Arabic
- ◆ Hindi
- ◆ Urdu
- ◆ Vietnamese
- ◆ Nepali
- ◆ Somali
- ◆ Macedonian
- ◆ Samoan
- ◆ Tagalog
- ◆ Punjabi
- ◆ Dari
- ◆ Mandarin
- ◆ Spanish
- ◆ Turkish
- ◆ Tamil
- ◆ Sinhalese
- ◆ Greek
- ◆ Dinka

15,274
STUDENTS PARTICIPATED
IN THE SURVEY

158
INDIGENOUS
STUDENTS

Top 10 Birth Countries (not including Australia)



BRILLIANT TOGETHER – OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

1

Create a VU community who are aware, informed and engaged as transformative change agents for cultural inclusion and prevention of racism.

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- 1.1 Create and deliver progressive, best-practice anti-racism and cultural inclusion training and professional learning to staff and students

 - 1.2 Support and share celebrations and days of significance that give voice to VU's diverse community

 - 1.3 Engage and partner with diverse communities to centre VU as a place where culturally diverse people have agency and can belong

 - 1.4 Ensure that all VU communications are representative of and respectful to First Nations Peoples and our culturally diverse community
-

2

Become one of the leading universities nationally for culturally inclusive and First Nations teaching, learning and research.

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- 2.1 Develop and share an inclusive content and teaching guide

 - 2.2 Align with and meet the Welcoming Universities research standard

 - 2.3 Align with and meet the Welcoming Universities teaching and learning standard

 - 2.4 Resource Moondani Balluk to support further development of First Nations content into curriculum
-

3

Create and share places and spaces that are welcoming, safe and inclusive for culturally diverse and First Nations staff, students, partners and communities.

3.1 Ensure that each campus has welcoming, accessible and safe physical spaces that are designed to be inclusive of diverse cultures and First Nations Peoples

3.2 Make sure that everyone knows how to report racism, that they are safe and protected in doing so, and have a clear process for what actions and supports are available

3.3 Ensure that each class online or in-person begins with an acknowledgement of Country and communicates clear expectations of respectful, inclusive behaviours

4

Embed equitable experiences and representation at every level, centring the voices and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people and people of colour.

4.1 Provide mentoring, sponsorship and career progression planning sessions for First Nations and diverse staff

4.2 Capture, analyse and measure change for staff diversity data

4.3 Ensure that the recruitment process actively encourages diverse applicants and provides an equitable and culturally safe process

4.4 Increase the representation of First Nations and diverse staff at a leadership level and on key decision-making groups

4.5 Provide pathways, opportunities and supports for First Nations, diverse and refugee and asylum seeker students





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At VU, we know we can't do this work alone. Victoria University would like to acknowledge and thank the organisations and groups who are contributing to this work:

- ◆ The VU *Cultural Inclusion Network* who co-created this plan over twelve months.
- ◆ The VU Together Against Racism working group who have co-created world-leading anti-racism online learning.
- ◆ Our government, funding and community partners including the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Ethnic Communities Council, the Scanlon Foundation, Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation and the many other community partners who work with us to advance racial justice.
- ◆ Our researchers contributing to social change including those in VU's Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities (ISILC) and VU's Community, Identity and Displacement Research Network (CIDRN).

CONTACT US

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