



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

# Widening Participation and Outreach

2016–2020 Strategy

Cover Image: *History is Made at Night*, 2013, Daniel Boyd.  
Image courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.



# Widening Participation and Outreach

2016–2020 Strategy

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# Introduction

The Widening Participation and Outreach Strategy sets a clear direction for the University of Sydney's commitment to the increased participation of under-represented students, from low socio-economic status (LSES), regional and remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

This strategy outlines our vision, principles, key priorities, and our collaborative model of working. Widening participation requires a strategic approach to early and sustained engagement, a focus on building key industry and community partnerships, and a commitment to global leadership and best practice in improving the educational outcomes for disadvantaged students.

Our strategy aims to:

1. Increase access and participation in higher education for people from low socio-economic status (LSES), regional and remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
2. Engage and connect with teachers, families, and community influencers to foster sustained change in beliefs and attitudes about higher education.
3. Inform collaborative models for experiential learning with industry and partner organisations.
4. Inform and promote research in education on widening participation and equity strategies.
5. Support University of Sydney graduate attributes through service learning, mentoring, and volunteering programs with schools and communities, partners, and faculties.

## Our history: 2009 to 2015



In 2008, the Australian Government commissioned the Bradley Review. In response, the University of Sydney's 2011–2015 Strategic Plan identified the need to attract students regardless of their social or cultural background, and established targets for participation of students from LSES backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and regional and remote students. To address this need the Social Inclusion Unit was established and a series of initiatives were delivered under the flagship of Compass.

Since launching in 2009, Compass successfully achieved outcomes for students, parents and teachers by:

- increasing academic preparedness
- enhancing confidence and motivation to attend university
- improving teaching practice and teachers' skills
- building capacity to access higher education\*.

Through Compass, the University of Sydney is also proud to be a founding member of the Bridges to Higher Education (Bridges) initiative. Bridges was awarded a \$21.2 million grant from the Commonwealth Government's Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) in 2011, with an economic return to LSES communities of \$54 million in projected earnings and tax revenues; equivalent to a \$6 return for every extra dollar invested in LSES schools. As of January 2015, the five participating universities in Sydney brought together 3471 volunteers to engage with more than 298,980 students, 15,644 teachers and 28,172 parents across 314 schools and 96 projects.

“This is a unique and rewarding experience. Our kids are making real connections between these activities and the opportunities on offer at the University. As a teacher, this is great because I can link the lessons from today directly to my classroom.”

**Teacher**  
East Lansvale Public School



# Engagements

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
Student engagements	3920	5443	11,608	17,583	19,995	24,538	30,033	113,120
Parent	12	776	408	439	549	333	371	2888
Schools	18	18	103	224	212	123	174	872
Professional learning	73	228	213	434	142	212	186	1488
Volunteers in schools	0	172	652	753	702	481	125	2885
<b>Total</b>	<b>4023</b>	<b>6637</b>	<b>12,984</b>	<b>19,433</b>	<b>21,600</b>	<b>25,687</b>	<b>30,889</b>	<b>121,253</b>

“The campus visits prompted discussions at home about university and career pathways, pointing to the broader impact of these programs on the personal growth of students. The experience of parents visiting the University was also instrumental in breaking down barriers such as that higher education is seen as open to all eligible people, and a future to which their children can aspire.”

**Teacher**  
Fairfield High School

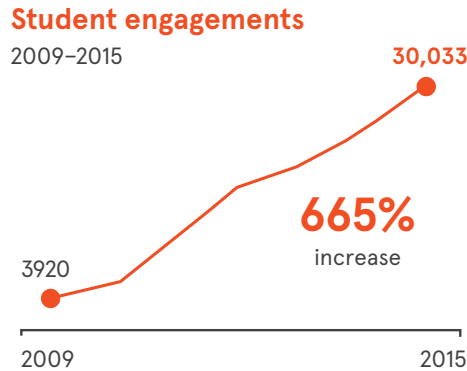
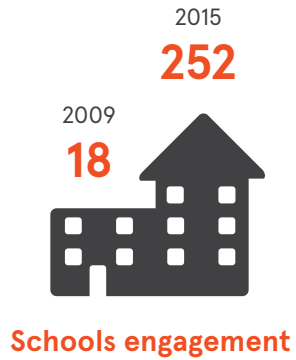
“I was supported by this very same program while I was a student at Fairvale High School. Joining the Homework Centre as a volunteer has been a great opportunity to help other students to get into uni. If they know that someone else from the area has gone to uni, it gives them motivation to try and go too!”

**Richie Lim**  
B Science and student volunteer

“The most valuable outcome from the campus visits is that students see that ‘everything is connected – and that what you do now matters for the future’. As a result of this positive experience, students have increased expectations and are talking about careers.”

**Teacher**  
Wattawa Heights Public School



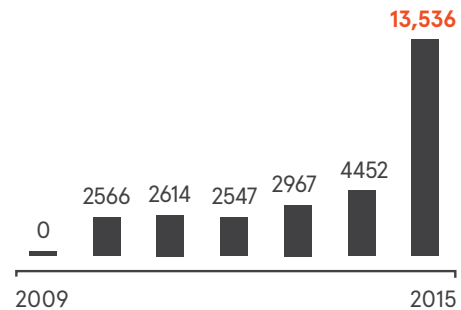


**568**  
year 9–12 students  
since 2014 have  
attended the Wingara  
Mura – Bunga Barrabugu  
Summer Program

**66**  
year 12 students  
completed the Bunga  
Barrabugu Winter Program



Percentage of students who had attended the  
Winter Program who enrolled at the University of Sydney



**Volunteer to student engagement**

“For the first week or so when I got home Mum had to tell me to shut up, to stop talking about it. I just honestly loved it so much. Even now I think a lot of people didn’t understand the weight of it. And not just in the way of getting out of the house and learning some stuff about uni. It was really the bringing together of the youth in our culture in a way that is properly reflective of today’s society. Because most of the time it’s thought that Aboriginality is still just dancing around and painted art and stuff like that and yeah that’s really important, but you’ve got to continue with new traditions and I think the Summer Program was very important in that way.”

**Matilda Langford**

Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Residential Program



# Key achievements

## Outreach

Initiative	Overview
Schools Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 26 curriculum-linked Year K-12 programs</li><li>- skills enrichment and development: occupational therapy, speech pathology, numeracy and literacy tutoring, film production and editing, stop-motion animation, homework clubs</li><li>- science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) focus: iScience, Mad Maker, Spectacular Science, Kickstart Science</li><li>- senior preparation workshops: Year 9 Goal Setting, Year 10 Preparation for Senior Study, Year 11 Thinking Ahead, Year 12 Promote Yourself, HSC academic enrichment</li><li>- high-intensity partnership model with 24 high schools and eight primary schools</li><li>- broader low-intensity engagement with 114 high schools</li><li>- professional learning opportunities for teachers</li><li>- parent information evenings.</li></ul>
Regional and Remote Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- occupational therapy</li><li>- Kickstart Science workshops</li><li>- HSC English enrichment</li><li>- preparation for senior study, scholarship development and application skills.</li></ul>
University, Community and Industry Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- partnerships with peak organisations: The Smith Family, AIME, Belvoir, and Fairfield City Council and Open Libraries</li><li>- University partnerships and collaborations: Bridges to Higher Education and Make Your Mark</li><li>- collaboration with industry partners to deliver unique pre-tertiary student experiences.</li></ul>



“For many pre-service teachers, it’s difficult to reconcile theory with practice until they have had first-hand experience teaching high-school students. Simply put, it’s not enough for pre-service teachers to read about pedagogy. In order to learn how to teach, they must have sustained, supported and situated experiences teaching in school contexts. The Preparation for Senior Study Program equips Year 10 students with the skills and motivation to succeed in their senior years of high school and beyond. Through a combination of campus-based workshops and school visits, pre-service English teachers work with Year 10 students in hands-on, goal-oriented activities. Not only do the high school students learn valuable skills, the pre-service teachers develop their knowledge of craft and pedagogy.”

**Jen Scott Curwood**  
Faculty of Education and Social Work

## Campus engagements

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Initiative	Overview
Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Year 7 and 8 Experience Uni</li><li>- Year 9–12 Summer Residential Program</li><li>- Year 12 Winter Residential Academic Enrichment Program</li><li>- Making Tomorrow Forum for school and community staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.</li></ul>
Campus Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Year 4 visits to Nicholson and Macleay Museums, and University Art Gallery</li><li>- Year 5 Enter Stage Right, Seymour Centre</li><li>- Year 6 Discover Uni</li><li>- Year 8 Investig8</li><li>- Year 9 STEM Day of Inquiry</li><li>- Year 11 Life at Sydney two-day residential program</li><li>- Year 10–12 Open Day skills enrichment workshops</li><li>- Parents' day student transition and preparation.</li></ul>
Volunteering and Service Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- annual recruitment</li><li>- mentoring, cultural competence, working with children and leadership training</li><li>- practical knowledge and skills in workplace environments</li><li>- approximately 140 volunteers, 60 student leaders, 45 service-learning students engaged annually.</li></ul>
Widening Participation Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- partnership with Educational Innovation at the University of Sydney</li><li>- Widening Participation Grants to seed faculty-based social-inclusion initiatives</li><li>- flagship project implementation for first-year university students.</li></ul>

## Digital outreach

Initiative	Overview
A*STAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– builds an active online community of young people</li><li>– a portal for academic resources in key learning areas linked to outreach learning experiences</li><li>– provides broader access to cultural capital</li><li>– provides opportunities to be active participants.</li></ul>
YourTutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– provides online, on-demand academic support</li><li>– personalised support for revision and problem practice with subject experts</li><li>– teacher-facing component providing enrichment and extension learning resources</li><li>– free to students who attend a government-identified Educational Access Schemes (EAS) school and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students.</li></ul>
Widening Participation and Outreach website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– provides resources to link schools and tertiary sector, and a platform for extension learning</li><li>– increases profile of program achievements, and engenders support from donors and alumni.</li></ul>

## Current national participation of disadvantaged and under-represented student groups

2014 Disadvantaged group	General community	Higher education enrolments
LSES background	25 percent	15.7 percent
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	2.7 percent	1.5 percent
Regional and remote	25.8 percent	20.6 percent
Non-English speaking background	5.4 percent	3.9 percent

Ref: Department of Education and Training (Table A and B universities only).



Key achievements

Widening Participation and Outreach

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# Looking forward: 2016 to 2020

The University of Sydney's 2016–2020 Strategic Plan represents a deepening commitment to widening participation and a diverse student community.

In response to the University of Sydney's 2016–2020 Strategic Plan, the Social Inclusion Unit has been renamed Widening Participation and Outreach (WPO), and now sits under the Global Student Recruitment and Mobility portfolio.

Widening Participation and Outreach now includes regional and remote, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment.

Social inclusion initiatives will continue and are intrinsic to, and embedded within, the Widening Participation and Outreach Strategy.





### **Our mission**

To prepare, motivate and engage young people with the support of their communities, to access, participate and succeed in higher education.

### **Our vision**

We aim to create and sustain a university in which, for the benefit of Australia and the wider world, the brightest and most-promising students, regardless of their cultural or social background, can thrive and realise their potential.

### **Our values**

Respect and Integrity  
Courage and Creativity  
Inclusion and Diversity  
Openness and Engagement



# Our schools engagement framework

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## Engagement Framework

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### Year K–2 Launch

#### **Building blocks – ready, set, go!**

Build student confidence and teacher knowledge in the application of foundational learning skills.

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### Year 3–6 Discover

#### **Be brave, ask questions – map your world**

Introduce university life to students to establish a positive association between learning and future opportunities.

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### Year 7–8 Experience

#### **Your interests, your passions, your potential**

Motivate students to explore their interests and link these to future pathways and higher education.

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### Year 9–10 Achieve

#### **Prepare now and reach for your future**

Develop skills and strategies for students to succeed in their study pathways; consolidate understanding of links between subject selection, higher education and careers.

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### Year 11–12 Act

#### **Realise your potential and own your future**

Enrich academic skills preparation for the HSC; identify leadership skills to progress scholarship applications and entry pathways to higher education.

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### Access

#### **Transition and success**

Provide programs to support the transition to university; create lasting support networks for continued learning and foster graduate attributes.

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“The Summer Program showed me how to get into Pharmacy, but then the Winter Program taught me study skills I would need for the HSC.”

**Alex Burke**

B Pharmacy

Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu  
Residential Program

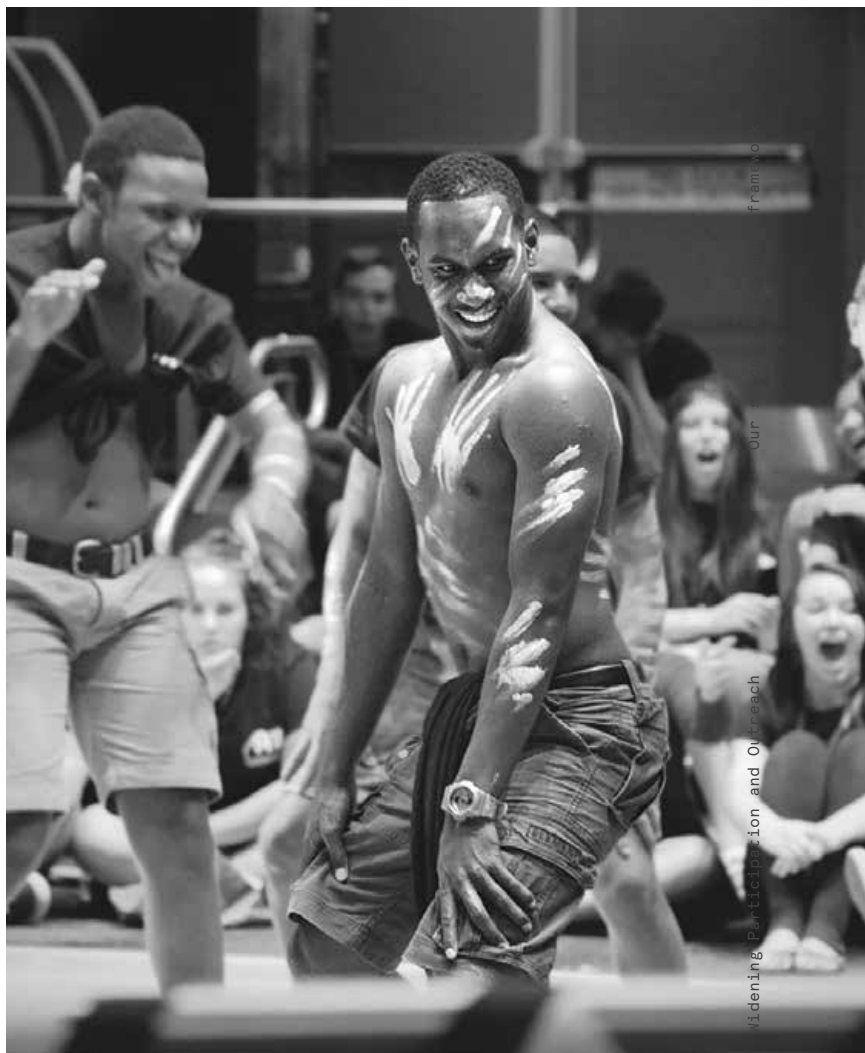
“I first went to the Winter Program, right before trials. It was a great opportunity to have tutors help with various subjects like drama. A professional actor came in. I performed my individual performance monologue. She gave me some advice and helped to enhance my performance. It was really good having that support.

The Winter Program was great because you had the opportunity to meet other Aboriginal students who were in the exact same situation as you.”

**Georgia Durmush**

B Psychology

Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu  
Residential Program



# Priorities: 2016 to 2020

## 1. Students (LSES, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, regional and remote)

- 1.1. increase engagement of, and transition to higher education for, students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- 1.2. grow and improve outreach programs for Years 10, 11 and 12 to support University of Sydney recruitment objectives and the University's Strategic Plan for a diverse student cohort
- 1.3. ongoing, consistent engagement across delivery models:
  - outreach and recruitment
  - campus engagements
  - digital engagements.

## 2. Schools and their communities

- 2.1. increase transition to higher education and knowledge of alternative entry pathways for identified cohorts
- 2.2. increase access to experiential learning opportunities with supporting online resources
- 2.3. provide teachers and school staff with NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) accredited professional development opportunities
- 2.4. provide programs that build student, parent and teacher capacity in the teaching and learning of literacy, and STEM.



### 3. University of Sydney

- 3.1. inform and support University admissions policy that focuses on improved pathways for under-represented students
- 3.2. support schools and respond with programs that address Department of Education-identified needs with a focus on collaboration and experiential learning
- 3.3. support and promote University research on student equity and diversity
- 3.4. promote the development of teaching and learning activities that support student transition and cultural competence
- 3.5. create student leader and volunteer programs that embody graduate qualities of understanding and respect for cultural and social differences
- 3.6. guide and facilitate faculties on the provision of service learning with LSES schools
- 3.7. provide practical knowledge, skills and training to enable students in LSES schools to effectively engage in service learning.

### 4. Industry and community partnerships

- 4.1. improve and grow existing partnerships
- 4.2. establish an ongoing partnership model that benefits identified communities
- 4.3. look to industry and donors to support innovation in education and invest in identified student cohorts accessing higher education.

# Key principles

To increase participation at the University of Sydney we will employ interdependent principles of learning and development, innovation, collaboration and sustainability.



## 1. Learning and development

- 1.1. our people, research, programs and initiatives inspire learning and motivation to participate in higher education
- 1.2. we partner with government, industry, schools, NSW Department of Education and community and non-government organisations (NGOs) to provide experiential learning opportunities for identified students
- 1.3. our dynamic and evolving initiatives inspire and act as a catalyst for advancing knowledge and understanding of student access to higher education
- 1.4. we share our knowledge and resources using all communication modes and platforms
- 1.5. we play a key role in identifying areas for future engagement and innovation in school outreach
- 1.6. we foster a culture of learning and development in our team and provide expertise for service learning and outreach.

“As a volunteer I have gained an insight into the practice of teaching and communication, bringing to life the theory that I have been exposed to as an Education student. I am now invited to work as a mentor for various events ranging from facilitating scholarship workshops, leadership programs and Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu residential programs. These events have further opened my eyes to the power of education and how all students, regardless of their backgrounds, can strive for higher education.”

**Mitchell Ha**

B Education and student volunteer

**2. Innovation**

- 2.1 we inspire and support creativity and innovation in our diverse community
- 2.2 our experiences are curriculum linked, innovative, participatory and productive
- 2.3 our programs promote and foster innovation and leadership
- 2.4 our communication is innovative and increases our reach.

**3. Collaboration**

- 3.1 we provide opportunities and platforms to co-create learning experiences and inter-disciplinary approaches with other organisations for our identified cohort
- 3.2 we establish partnerships with community, not-for-profit, government and industry organisations to foster mutually beneficial relationships and share our knowledge and expertise with these networks
- 3.3 we will build agile interdisciplinary teams empowering our work area to innovate and be responsive to identified needs.

**4. Sustainability**

- 4.1. we develop competitive strategies to increase self-generated income through sponsorship and donations
- 4.2 we operate according to University governance, informed by research and ongoing evaluation of our programs, and with a commitment to continuous improvement
- 4.3 our organisational structure and team will be agile and efficient.





“I became confident to apply for the E12 Access Scheme and the Sydney Scholars Award because of the encouragement and guidance given during the Promote Yourself workshop. I ended up getting both these scholarships. Gaining early entry through the E12 scheme pushed me to work harder in the HSC, as I knew the University believed in my potential and the power of education to change lives.”

**Jared Hermogenes**

B Applied Science and student volunteer



“Widening Participation and Outreach made possible the establishment of our Link Program five years ago. Link has now partnered with the Meers Foundation, attracting significant external funding for our outreach programs. WPO ensures that, across the University, we share insights and strategies to build coherent and effective programs with long-term capacity to improve the culture at the University of Sydney.”

**Dr Melissa Hardie**

Senior Lecturer

Department of English

# Measuring achievements

Priority	Principle	Initiative	Key Performance Indicators
1.1	1.1–1.3	increase UAC preferences from identified cohorts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– increased diversity of programs</li> <li>– integration of Promote Yourself workshops with GSRM and strategically increase identified schools</li> <li>– increased number of students from partner schools/communities accessing and participating in higher education.</li> </ul>
1.2	1.2 2.2 3.1	increase overall engagement numbers for Years 10, 11 and 12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– expanded scope of engagement in the Year 10, 11 and 12 space for additional enrichment experiences</li> <li>– closer working relationship with Global Student Recruitment and Mobility and increased collaborations on program delivery</li> <li>– increased reach and impact of digital platforms to support senior school years engagements.</li> </ul>
1.3	1.1–1.6 2.1–2.4 3.1–3.3	audience growth and access across all platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– outreach and recruitment</li> <li>– campus engagements</li> <li>– digital engagements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– expanded low-intensity school model</li> <li>– new community partnerships activated and excelling; including councils, libraries and non-government organisations</li> <li>– increased campus engagements from identified cohorts through widening participation initiatives</li> <li>– increased page views per month (by 1400).</li> </ul>

Priority	Principle	Initiative	Key Performance Indicators
2.1	1.2–1.5 2.1–2.3 3.1–3.2	increase reach and access to senior program for Years 10, 11 and 12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– increased engagement numbers and UAC preference data</li> <li>– growth in WPO identified schools successfully accessing alternative entry pathways to the University of Sydney.</li> </ul>
2.2	1.1–2.4	significant digital audience development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– increased:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– website traffic</li> <li>– social media activation: likes, shares and interaction on A-STAR</li> <li>– student submissions</li> <li>– Yourtutor usage.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2.3	1.1–3.3	increase teacher and school staff participation in professional learning and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– increased access to professional learning opportunities for teachers and school staff from identified schools</li> <li>– increased participation of teachers and school staff.</li> </ul>
2.4	1.2–1.5 2.1–2.3 3.1–3.2	provide curriculum-based programs with a focus on literacy and STEM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– qualitative evaluation data from program participants that measures capacity development in literacy and STEM</li> <li>– improved resources available to support schools and communities in the provision of programs that increase capacity in literacy and STEM.</li> </ul>
3.1	1.1 1.4	improve access to identified under-represented groups at the University of Sydney.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– increased applications through alternative pathways and increased access from school partner students.</li> </ul>
3.2	1.2–1.5 2.1–2.3 3.1–3.2	<p>increase teacher capacity to engage in programs and support student learning</p> <p>increase number of students participating in university outreach programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– increased professional learning offerings and teacher participation</li> <li>– maintaining directory of University-wide school outreach</li> <li>– improved access to University-wide programs from identified cohorts.</li> </ul>

Priority	Principle	Initiative	Key Performance Indicators
3.3	1.3-1.4 2.1-2.3 3.1 4.2	promote University-wide recognition for excellence in diversity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish Widening Participation Professional Development Travel Grants scheme</li> <li>- publication of research papers and conference presentations.</li> </ul>
3.4	1.1 1.5 2.2 3.1	<p>continue implementation and expansion of the Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu Strategy.</p> <p>contribute to first in family and LSES transition initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- growth in student participation rates from identified cohorts</li> <li>- improvements in student completion rates from identified cohorts</li> <li>- increased staff and student satisfaction from participation in new opportunities.</li> </ul>
3.5	1.1 1.3 1.6 2.2 3.2	<p>expand number of trained volunteers to deliver programs</p> <p>promote access to training for all University volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- University transcript recognition</li> <li>- increased number of trained volunteers in delivering programs</li> <li>- improvements in graduate outcomes and increased student satisfaction from volunteer learning and development opportunities.</li> </ul>
3.6-3.7	1.3 1.6 2.1 2.2 3.1 4.2	expand the development of service learning in LSES schools in collaboration with faculties at the University.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increased number of students who undertake experiential learning opportunities through WPO supported service learning programs in LSES schools</li> <li>- increased number of service learning programs in LSES schools</li> <li>- create a directory of University of Sydney service learning opportunities</li> <li>- improved in graduate outcomes.</li> </ul>
4.1	1.2 1.5 3.1 3.2 4.1-4.3	develop a focused approach to partnership engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improvement in the number and quality of industry and community partners committed to WPO strategy and outcomes.</li> </ul>

Priority	Principle	Initiative	Key Performance Indicators
4.2	1.2 1.5 1.6 2.1-3.2 4.1-4.3	increase targeted partnerships with links to programs and student outcomes.	- audit existing partnerships and create a standardised approach for sustainable partnership engagement.
4.3	1.1 1.2 2.1 2.3 3.2 4.1-4.3	implement a significant stakeholder income model that promotes the importance of WPO programs.	- established competitive donor strategy with the Alumni and Development team - increased donations and sponsorship contributions.







“The benefits of participating in these programs are twofold: faculty staff and students gain greater insight into inequalities within health and education while developing an understanding of the social determinants of health.

We have developed positive relationships with students who have attended Outreach events at the University over the last 5 years, as they progress from primary to high school. It’s very rewarding to see them improve in academic capability, gain confidence and understanding of the options available to them in higher education.”

**Cathryn Forsythe**  
Faculty of Dentistry

**Widening Participation and Outreach**

Level 4 Jane Foss Russell G02

The University of Sydney NSW 2006

+61 2 8627 8515

[wpo.administration@sydney.edu.au](mailto:wpo.administration@sydney.edu.au)

[sydney.edu.au/wpo](http://sydney.edu.au/wpo)