

Minutes of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 7 November 2007.

There were present: The Chair of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Professor Derrick Armstrong, Acting Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro Vice-Chancellor presiding, Professor Bruce Sutton, Chair Academic Board, Ms Michaelle Blanchard, Deputy Director of the Koori Centre, Ms Sally Farrington, Head, Yooroang Garang, Dr Margaret Edmond, Director Student Services, Ms Kate Barnsley, Co-President of SUPRA, Mr Colin L. James, Director I.B. Fell Housing Research Centre, Ms Lynette Riley-Mundine, Academic Coordinator, Koori Centre and Ms Lyn Shoemark, Assistant Director of Sydney People Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit. Ms Sally Paynter was in attendance.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Drs Ann Cheryl Armstrong and Manjula Sharma, Ms Vicki Bradford, Ms Janet Mooney, Ms Lynette Riley-Mundine and Ms Sue Page.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee agreed to the following amendments to the minutes:

(deletions indicated with strikethrough, additions indicated with underline)

The Chair said that there was a need for a more co-ordinated approach which would require accountability and engagement across the University. ~~To do this he suggested establishing an Indigenous Strategy Committee with senior staff of the University as members to tackle issues that were not able to be dealt with by the IEAC.~~ The Chair suggested that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Community), Professor Andrew Coats could be invited to attend the IEAC meetings to discuss relevant Indigenous issues and that these issues may be taken to senior executive committees such as the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee or the Senior Executive Group for discussion. Members agreed that the IEAC membership should be expanded to ensure there was a representative from all faculty clusters to enable interface with all areas of the University.

Resolution 14/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee adopted the amended minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 September 2007 as a true record.

3. Matters arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)

4. Report of the Chair

4.1 National Study of Indigenous Support Centres

The Chair asked Ms Blanchard to report on the National Study of Indigenous Support Centres conducted by Erebus International. Ms Blanchard explained that the University had been invited by Erabus to participate in the Survey and had completed an initial questionnaire in August and had also hosted a site visit on Friday 2 November. Representatives from Erabus interviewed various representatives from the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang including staff and student focus groups and community members. These interviews were carried out with a view to gathering data to build on the results already gathered from the questionnaire and to identify wide-ranging issues and to develop best practice. Ms Blanchard added that the Erabus representatives had been impressed by the quality of Indigenous Support Services offered by the University of Sydney.

The Chair thanked Ms Blanchard for the report and requested that she report back to the Committee when the results of the Survey were known. He added that the participation in the survey was an ideal opportunity for staff to reflect on their activities and to look at how the Koori Centre and Yooroang Garang as support units related to and were supported by the University.

Resolution 15/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report on the National Study of Indigenous Support Centres and that the results of the survey would be reported to the Committee once they were known.

5. Update on the development of a new entity for Indigenous Support Services

The Chair welcomed Ms Antoinette Holt, HR Relationship Manager for SydenyPeople, to the meeting and asked her to update the Committee on the change management process for the new entity for Indigenous support services. Ms Holt advised that she and Ms Mooney had finalised the membership of the working party and that the composition of this group, approximately 10 representatives, would be approved by Professor Armstrong. Ms Holt had held sessions with the administrative team from the Koori Centre at the retreat in September and that once the report on these discussions had been approved by Ms Mooney a report could be circulated to the IEAC.

In response to a question raised about the terms of reference for the working party, Ms Holt advised that the group would be reviewing the current model of the Koori Centre and examining the interaction between the Koori Centre and faculties and building upon the initial change management discussions that Ms Yashadana had conducted. Ms Holt added that she hoped to run a similar information sharing session with academic staff from the Koori Centre to identify common areas where positive changes could be made. Ms Blanchard advised that the issues identified by staff and students during the Erabus Survey would be beneficial to this process.

Ms Farrington asked Ms Holt what advice she should be providing to her staff at Yooroang Garang about the change management process. Ms Holt advised that it was important to ensure that all staff were informed honestly about the process and that once the Working Party had met there would be more information available to staff about the direction that the process would be taking. The Chair advised that there was also the more complicated issue of where Yooroang Garang fitted within the Faculty of Health Science and how this would inturn fit with the new entity. Members noted that there would be consultation with staff at Yooroang Garang and discussions across all faculties with a view to enhancing central Indigenous support services and building relationships between these central services and faculties.

The Chair thanked Ms Holt for the report and noted that she would continue to provide updates to the Committee on the change management process.

Resolution 16/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the update on the development of a new entity for Indigenous Support Services.

6. Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)

The SUPRA Co-President, Ms Kate Barnsley advised that SUPRA had been contacted by several students about concerns they had in relation to accessing ITAS programs and the confusion about the processes that surrounded the scheme. Ms Blanchard advised that the Koori Centre were in the process of reviewing ITAS and had identified similar issues with the current processes that SUPRA had highlighted. The Committee noted that the Koori Centre would be preparing a report on ITAS which would outline details of initiatives adopted to address these issues. Ms Blanchard questioned whether the IEAC meeting was the appropriate forum to be discussing internal processes and that she would be happy to meet with SUPRA representatives to discuss ITAS further.

The Chair commented that the issue of how the University was communicating with students was a valid one and that this would be something to be mindful of whilst reviewing the ITAS processes.

Ms Barnsley and Ms Blanchard agreed to continue discussions about the current ITAS processes outside the Committee with a view to the Koori Centre reporting back to IEAC on the outcome of the review of ITAS.

Resolution 17/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the discussions on the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme.

7. Meeting dates 2008

The Committee approved the following meeting dates for 2008:

13 February

16 April

4 June

20 August

22 October

Resolution 18/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee approved the meeting dates for 2008.

8. Progress report on the proposed "expression of interest" for the Victoria Park Gardener's Cottage, engaging the local Koori community and the Sydney City Council with the University

Mr Colin James reported on the proposed expression of interest to use the Victoria Park Gardener's Cottage as a multi-purpose meeting space and a Koori Café. Mr James advised that because of the location of the Cottage the Café would attract a lot of passing trade and be an ideal place for cultural displays or as an information centre. In addition to this proposal Mr James advised that the Indigenous Community had discussed establishing a proper burial ground for the Gadigal people that may include Indigenous sculpture or a totem pole.

Members noted that the University had once owned the Gardener's Cottage but that it was now owned by the Sydney City Council. The Chair suggested that Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Community), Professor Andrew Coats and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure and Campus Services) be consulted about the proposal and that Mr James could present these ideas to seek the University's support. Members noted that an accessible Indigenous meeting space in Victoria Park would form a very strong link between the University and the Indigenous Community.

Mr James agreed to prepare a briefing paper on the proposal for the Victoria Park Gardener's Cottage for the Chair to discuss with Professor Coats.

Resolution 19/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report on the expression of interest for the Victoria Park Gardener's Cottage.

9. Update on the Yabun Festival

Dr Lilon Bandler advised that there had been some effort made this year to run a stall at the Yabun Festival but that it had not been as successful as hoped. The Committee agreed that a collective approach from the Koori Centre, Yooroang Garang, the School of Public Health and the Faculty of Medicine would enable the University to make a greater impact at the festival. Dr Edmond suggested that the Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment, Ms Adrienne Jerram could also be consulted about the arrangements for the festival.

Resolution 20/07

The Indigenous Education Advisory Committee noted the report on the Yabun Festival.

10. Any other business**10.1 Cadet Officers**

The Committee noted that Ms Leona Oliver from Yooroang Garang had been seconded to the SydneyPeople Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit as Indigenous Employment Officer and would be overseeing cadetships. Members agreed that the issue of Indigenous student cadetships was something the Committee would explore in 2008 and that it was a possible agenda item for an early meeting next year..