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| MEDIA RELEASEWednesday 26 February 2020  |

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| FURTHER STRONG GAINS: MORE INDIGENOUS STUDENTS GOING TO UNI |

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| Further strong gains have been made in Indigenous students going to university, with enrolments up 3.6 percent in 2018 – compared to 0.4 percent for non-Indigenous students.Building on progress over the past decade, the latest growth means 19,935 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now studying at university – up from 9,490 in 2008.And these gains are important to closing the gap, because having a university degree completely closes the gap in employment rates between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people.The data is published today in an annual progress report under the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy – drafted in partnership with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC).Universities Australia Chief Executive Catriona Jackson said while much remained to be done to close the gap in university enrolments, further strong progress had been made this year.“Indigenous enrolments have run at triple the rate of growth for non-Indigenous student enrolments in recent years – and that’s terrific,” she said.“But the youth population in Indigenous communities has also grown – so, in coming years, we’ll have to work harder to keep the gains made in the past decade, especially among young men.”NATSIHEC President Dr Leanne Holt said it was important to acknowledge the strong progress, while also setting our sights on the next areas where gains were needed.This included further work to develop Indigenous research strategies at universities and grow the pipeline of Indigenous academics rising through the ranks of teaching and research roles.“Fostering Indigenous research and teaching talent in universities will help to create more of the visible role models who are crucial to Indigenous student recruitment and success,” she said.“And it creates a powerful cohort across the academy who bring their knowledge, leadership and research capability to the big challenges for our people and our country.”This year’s report also highlights that gains have been made to embed Indigenous knowledge and content in more university courses and subjects for all students to study.Under the UA Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020, the UA Board and NATSIHEC executive meet each year to review progress and set priorities for their work together.This year, UA will consult across the sector and with Indigenous partners to refresh the targets and goals of the strategy, reflect the progress made, and identify areas for renewed focus and effort.The second annual progress report can be found [here](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/WCaBC5QP8ySwK6rpSOJLtq?domain=link.universitiesaustralia.edu.au). |

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| **Contact**0480 031 061media@universitiesaustralia.edu.au  |

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