Within a decade, Monash will be known as the Australian university with the greatest impact on social mobility\(^1\), through its capacity to recognise, support and extend talented students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

OVERVIEW

Monash University will enrol more students from low socioeconomic status (SES) communities and ensure that they graduate equipped to make significant contributions in their careers and to the community.

We will do this through five Widening Participation priorities and associated initiatives:

1. **Increase demand from talented low SES students**
   - Scale up mentoring of secondary students by Monash undergraduates
   - Boost our national outreach

2. **Select for talent and equity**
   - Set targets for each broad course cluster
   - Implement new university wide signature admissions program
   - Implement tailored strategies for fields that are 'hard to reach' and remove unnecessary inhibitors to access

3. **Provide financial and practical support**
   - Implement the Scholarships Strategy
   - Guarantee access to on-campus and local employment for low SES students

4. **Ensure Monash graduates are expert, engaged and in-demand**
   - Prioritise low SES students’ access to high-value opportunities.
   - Connect alumni with low SES students across the student lifecycle

5. **Promote Monash’s commitment to widening participation.**
   - Reflect widening participation priorities in all our education and administration plans
   - Raise the profile of programs for prospective and current low SES students across all channels
   - Articulate our aspirations and impact to prospective and current students, partner organisations and the community.

The five Widening Participation priorities work together to create a virtuous cycle with each priority reinforcing and optimizing the impact of the others, by building both our capacity to respond and our reputation for access and excellence.

\(^{1}\) The Washington Monthly in the USA produces an annual National Universities Ranking in which it rates universities based on their contribution to the public good in three broad categories: Social Mobility (recruiting and graduating low-income students), Research (producing cutting-edge scholarship and PhDs), and Service (encouraging students to give something back to their country). These criteria seem in tune with the university Monash aspires to be as represented in in Focus Monash.

Our capacity to respond is increased by integrating inclusion as an accountability in all education and administrative activities, and by building our expertise in serving low SES communities.

Our increased performance will contribute to recognition both within and beyond the university that Monash seeks and recognises talent regardless of circumstance and that a Monash education can offer students life-changing opportunities. Communicating the impact of our work will increase our capacity to mobilise resources, both financial and in kind, to support the participation and outcomes of low SES students at Monash.

This strategy addresses widening participation of domestic students from low SES communities. The context and needs of Australian Indigenous students are addressed through the Indigenous Plan under the leadership of Yulendj, and the Student Plan reflects the different support needs of other cohorts including students with disabilities and regional students, led by Campus Community Division.

Over the next five years, the scope of our commitment will extend nationally, and we will work towards a truly global approach to seeking and fostering talent, including seeking support from international alumni and donors to enable talented disadvantaged students outside Australia to study at Monash.

**CONTEXT**

As participation in higher education increases from mass towards universal scale, access alone is not enough. The effect of university education on an individual’s future depends more than ever on the quality of that education. Monash education offers opportunities that are life-changing — including academic excellence, international engagement and industry experience. Our aim is for Monash students from low SES communities to join the global cohort of Monash alumni who are recognised and sought after as leaders and experts.

Monash has set the context for this approach in its Strategic Plan 2015-2020, Focus Monash:
To seek talented students and staff, irrespective of social or economic circumstances and build a connected community of students and staff in a diverse University that is deeply engaged with the wider community.

The current plan builds on the history of Monash as a university founded to serve the community, and vision of working towards a world that is ‘diverse, inclusive, innovative and sustainable’.

Over the past five years, Monash has made significant progress in engaging and supporting students from low SES status backgrounds. Monash is a destination of choice for higher achieving low SES students in Victoria. More low SES students are studying, succeeding and often excelling at Monash than ever before.

We are still, however, falling short of our goals for enrolling a proportional share of low SES students. Our current approach is constrained by the socially unequal distribution of school achievement, and our generous program of scholarships and financial support does not yet meet the needs of financially disadvantaged students.

A long-term approach is needed to build a cycle of success and engagement to achieve our aspirations in both inclusion and excellence.

**ASPIRATION**

Within a decade, Monash is known as the Australian university with the greatest impact on social mobility, through its capacity to recognise, support and extend talented students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2020 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation of domestic students from low SES communities at 80% parity with the Victorian population.</td>
<td>- Monash is the Victorian university of first choice for talented students from educationally disadvantaged communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | - 36% of commencing domestic undergraduates and commencers into professional entry Masters courses are from low SES communities.
| Participation of students from low SES communities in similar proportions to other students across the range of course clusters. | - At least 25% of commencing undergraduates into each course cluster are from low SES communities. |
| Graduate outcomes for low SES students are indistinguishable from those of other Monash graduates. | - Academic outcomes (achievement, retention, progress and completion rates) for low SES students are at parity with the overall domestic Monash cohort. |
| | - Employment rates, starting salaries and progress to postgraduate study are at parity with the overall domestic Monash cohort. |
| The capacity to mobilise resources, both financial and in kind, to support the participation and outcomes of low SES students at Monash. | - Evidence of increased alumni and donor engagement with Monash’s widening participation agenda. |

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2 Attachment 1: Low SES participation at Monash — Outcomes, environment and issues,

3 ‘Low SES’ is to be understood at Monash to refer to the lower half of the national socioeconomic profile. Since 45.2% of the Victorian population is in the bottom half SES nationally according to the 2011 census, 36% is currently 80% of Victorian population parity. Attachment 1: Low SES participation at Monash — Outcomes, environment and issues, Part 2, p 14-16.
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 Increase applications to Monash from talented low SES students

Monash has implemented a successful outreach program for Years 8 to 12 in 40 schools in outer south-east Melbourne and south-east Victoria as part of our commitment to engage with our communities to support higher education aspiration and participation generally. Monash also offers individual personalised mentoring to Year 11 and 12 students, and a range of targeted programs such as our SEAMS residential program to increase the mathematics and science VCE outcomes for talented students from disadvantaged schools, and the Hands on Health academic enrichment and immersion program. These will continue.

The future focus is on scaling up individual and small group mentoring with students from Year 9 to Year 12 to increase university-readiness, and on further broadening engagement with talented but disadvantaged students beyond our region through targeted recruitment activities and marketing campaigns.

Only 60% of undergraduate domestic commencers to a Bachelors degree at Monash each year are school leavers. The remaining 40% are typically either mature aged entrants to tertiary education, VET pathway students or have undertaken some higher education study in another institution. Marketing to these cohorts is more complex than to school attendees but, historically, they have delivered more students from low SES backgrounds to Monash than have school leaver cohorts. They form a critical part of any strategy to widen participation. There is also an opportunity to encourage low SES students considering professional entry Masters courses (often CSP), or indeed expert graduate courses, to transfer to Monash after their first degree.

Outreach to inform aspiration

- Focus the Schools Access Monash (Years 8-12) program to increase individualised activities with Year 9 and 10 students with academic potential [Access Monash]
- Increase face to face and online mentoring/tutoring to motivated Year 11 and 12 students in low SES schools delivered by current Monash undergraduates. [Access Monash]
- Introduce a tutoring program to Indigenous students in partner schools [Yulendj, Access Monash]
- Continue outreach focussed on increasing students knowledge of specific disciplines, professions and industries and extend to HASS fields to complement the current focuss on STEM. [Access Monash with Faculties]

Recruitment campaign

- Building on work to date, implement a focussed recruitment plan targeting:
  - Victorian and interstate schools with higher achieving low SES students and potential to deliver more students to Monash.
  - low SES non-school leavers seeking entry to undergraduate courses including those transferring from other higher educations institutions or from a VET pathway and those returning to study
  - low SES students seeking professional entry graduate courses. [MC&SR, Access Monash]

2016 deliverables:

- Recruit 300 Access Monash Ambassadors and mentor 600 Year 11 and 12 students from SAM schools
- Identify and develop targeted plans for schools with higher-performing low SES cohorts and potential to deliver more students to Monash
- Implement marketing program for revised scholarships strategy for 2017 recruitment and re-enrolment, including more accessible Scholarships website
- Improve administrative system improvements to support ongoing engagement with under represented schools and non-school leaver populations (e.g. an URS tick box on CRM)

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*Attachment 1: Low SES participation at Monash — Outcomes, environment and issues, Part 1a, p 3-5.

5 This excludes 1-year end-on honours, that is, this data refers to students admitted to 3-, 4- or 5-year Bachelor’s degree course. See University Planning and Statistics Student/Course Enrolment: 2010-2015*.
2 Select for talent and equity

Monash has progressively improved its recognition of the impact of circumstances on students’ school results through the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) and the Monash Guarantee\(^6\). Monash will implement improvements for 2016 admissions in order to better deliver on our aspirations. We will also monitor their implementation to ensure that their design is optimal and that they are fully implemented across the university.

Our data on the social distribution of school achievement suggest that these alone will not be sufficient and a bolder approach to the development of admissions and pathways strategies will be required to give life and credibility to our claim that we know that talent is often masked by circumstances and that talent and ATAR are not the same.

**Targets**
- Set targets for each broad course cluster [Faculties, Access Monash]

**Admission**
- Create a signature university wide admission program to attract talented young people (e.g. each school to nominate a disadvantaged 'wild card' to offered or interviewed for special consideration to their course of choice) [Access Monash, MC&SR]
- Investigate the potential to prioritise students from low SES backgrounds for available CSP places in graduate coursework programs [Access Monash, Graduate Education]

**Pathways**
- Expand the enabling programs for mature aged students (MAP and single unit enrolment) to provide pathways to more Monash courses [Resp: Access Monash]
- Expand the potential of the Diploma of Higher Education (DOHE) to enable access beyond Science to other Monash Bachelor programs that have entry levels at ATAR equivalent 80+. [Access Monash, Faculties]
- Utilise Bachelors programs and our double degree structure to provide pathways for low SES students to course clusters that are below target or 'hard to reach' (that is, those with entry levels at ATAR equivalent 90+). [Access Monash, Faculties]

**2016 deliverables:**
- Improvement targets for access by low SES students by course cluster established by April 2016
- Signature university wide admissions program designed.
- Field-appropriate pathway strategies for faculties to be implemented for 2017
- Prerequisites reviewed to remove unnecessary inhibitors to access
- Definition of 'top 20%' to include students whose talent may be masked by circumstances [Resp: UPS].

\(^6\) Attachment 1: Low SES participation at Monash — Outcomes, environment and issues, Part 1b, p 5-6
3 Provide financial and practical support

A robust strategy for scholarships and financial support can contribute significantly to the attainment of Monash’s ambitions in social inclusion. The end goal is to ensure sufficient financial support to all students relative to financial need to ensure they can meet their basic living and education costs while also being able to engage with the richness and breadth of opportunity available to a Monash student.

Monash will continue to grow the number of scholarships and grants available to students experiencing financial disadvantage. This will be accompanied by a highly focussed campaign to ensure access to regular, flexible and suitable employment on campus or nearby. Finally a package of support will be directed at ensuring a smooth transition to higher education and full participation in the academic and social aspects of student life.

Scholarships and grants
- Build the scholarships campaign focusing on the Community Leaders Scholarships, support for on campus accommodation, and high-priority student groups, including Indigenous students and asylum seekers. [ERDA]
- Re-focus scholarship and other support to disadvantaged students, including:
  - Cap duration of Excellence scholarships awarded without consideration of disadvantage to 4 years and redirect funds released to disadvantage.
  - Increase the UniStart grant for financially disadvantaged students to $1000 for commencing students and $500 annually thereafter.
  - More and higher value needs-based scholarships for support and accommodation.
  - Reserve some equity scholarships to recognise excellent achievement of continuing students from disadvantaged communities.
  - Remove the parity distinctions between scholarships awarded completely on 'merit' and those awarded partly or wholly on equity. [Scholarships Office, Education Programs Office]
- Review centrally funded scholarships and grants, to assess effectiveness in meeting varied students’ needs including, for example, students admitted to courses in other than their first year [Access Monash, Scholarships Office]
- Redevelop the website to make the full scholarship offer more accessible to both prospective and current students. [MC&SR, Scholarships Office]

Employment
- Generate more on-campus and accessible employment (eg., encouraging faculties and divisions to employ students, adding student employment as a condition in university procurement contracts and leases, and seeking external partners locally to employ students) with the ultimate goal of being able to guarantee a certain number of hours each week of work on campus or nearby for financially disadvantaged students who seek it. [Campus Community, HR]

Community
- Integrate the delivery of financial support with a wider offering of academic and pastoral support (such as faculty based peer mentoring) to ensure students are fully aware of the additional help available to them and to ensure a smooth transition into university. [Access Monash, Campus Community]
- Promote to prospective low SES students, and their families, the benefits of immersion in the on-campus community, particularly in the transition year and by living on campus or participating in virtual colleges. [MC&SR, Access Monash, Campus Community]

2016 deliverables:
- Implement revised Scholarships Strategy (with a strong marketing program for 2017 intake)
- Make 300 Community Leaders Scholarships valued at $4000 available for 2017 with recipients mentoring 600 Year 11 and 12 students.
- Establish new scholarship website for 2016 recruitment and re-enrolment season
- Prepare and gain approval for a five year plan to increase on campus (or nearby) employment opportunities for students, (e.g., building student employment into procurement criteria) and hence to guarantee availability of local employment to all financially in need.
4 Ensure Monash graduates are expert, engaged and in demand

Excellent graduate outcomes and lifelong alumni engagement are built through participation in a full range of co-curricular and enhancement activities that provide access to professional networks and to international, community and industry experiences. Monash will support low SES students to participate in the full range of opportunities available through Monash, by providing financial support and priority access.

**Engagement**
- Provide grants to low SES students, and prioritise their opportunity, to participate in high impact student engagement activities such as Study Abroad, living in on-campus residential accommodation, summer programs. [DVC GE, Campus Community, Faculties, Access Monash]
- Extend the Community Leaders/ Access Monash Mentoring program to develop a Senior Ambassador program for mentors to be mentored by alumni. [Access Monash, ERDA]

**Alumni**
- Engage Monash alumni as supporters for the Scholarships Development campaign and as mentors for Senior Ambassadors. [Access Monash, ERDA]

2016 deliverables:
- Structured program for alumni to mentor Senior Ambassadors for implementation in 2017.
- Scholarships Development campaign.

5 Promote Monash’ commitment to widening participation

Awareness of opportunities is the first step towards action. Ensuring that our commitment to recognising, supporting and extending talented students is well understood both within Monash and in our communities is integral to creating a cycle of engagement and success.

**Visibility**
- Communicate our aspirations and impact to prospective and current students, partner organisations and the community.
- Design and implement an effective communications strategy to promote and position Monash’s approach to admissions and the scholarship program to maximise their benefit and promote their alignment with Monash’s education value proposition. [MC&SR]

**Systematic action**
- Reflect widening participation priorities in all our education and administration plans [Provost, COO]
- Promulgate the University’s equity admission strategies (SEAS, Monash Guarantee, enabling and pathway programs) and implement appropriate change management to support decision making to:
  - ensure full understanding of their value and the intent to enrol more disadvantaged students;
  - ensure full consideration of disadvantaging circumstances is given to non school leaver applicants, including new to higher education and transferring students;
  - enhance administrative processes to optimise applications and acceptances of offers from low SES students. [Admissions Office, Access Monash].

2016 deliverables:
- Integrate widening participation in all key communications and marketing plans
- Implement a communications strategy to support admissions and scholarships for 2017 entry
- Reflect widening participation priorities in 2017 enabling plans
- Implement change management to support admissions programs.