

The Hole in the Pocket: Towards a Racially-Inclusive Academy

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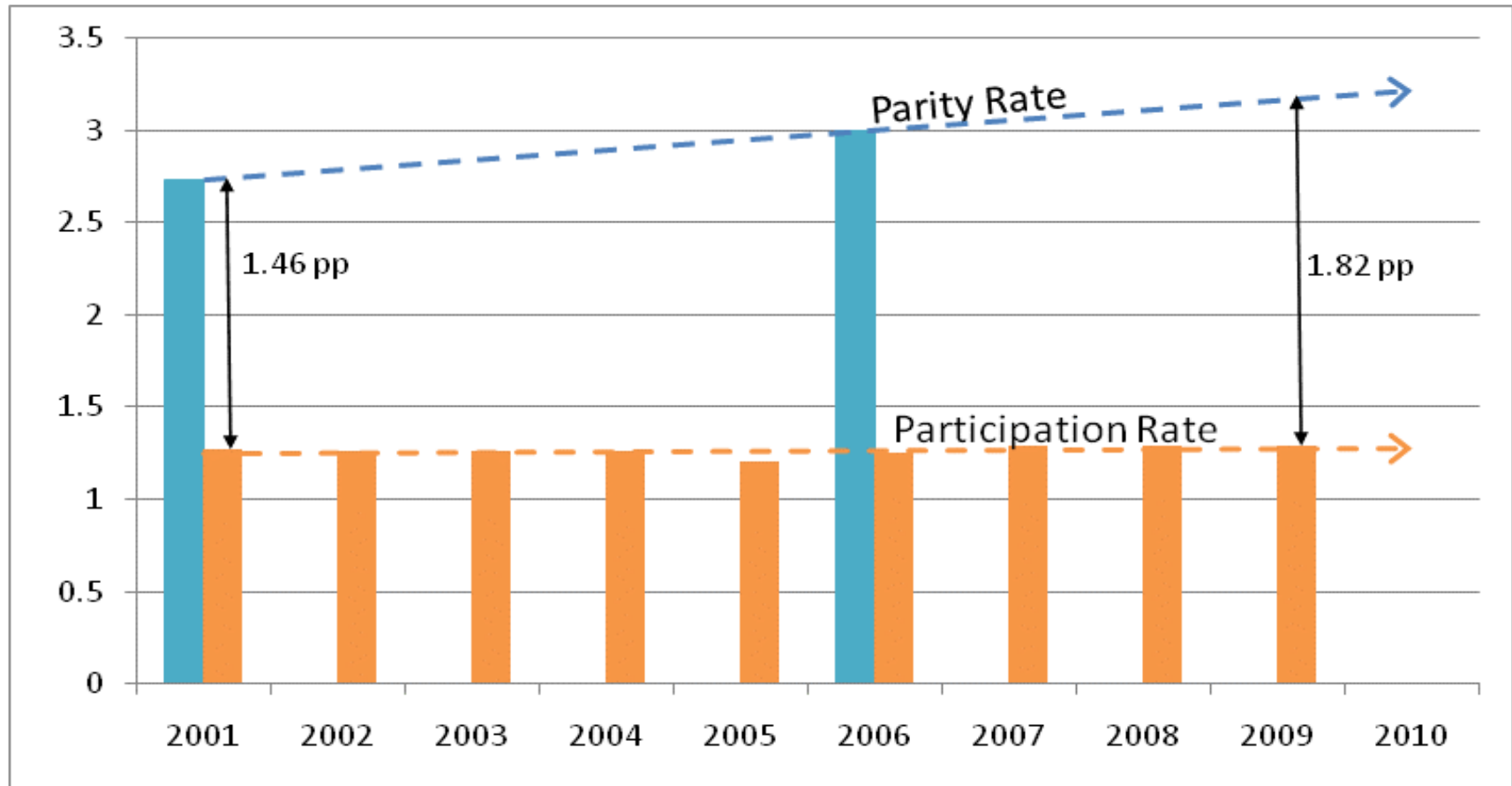
Third Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council



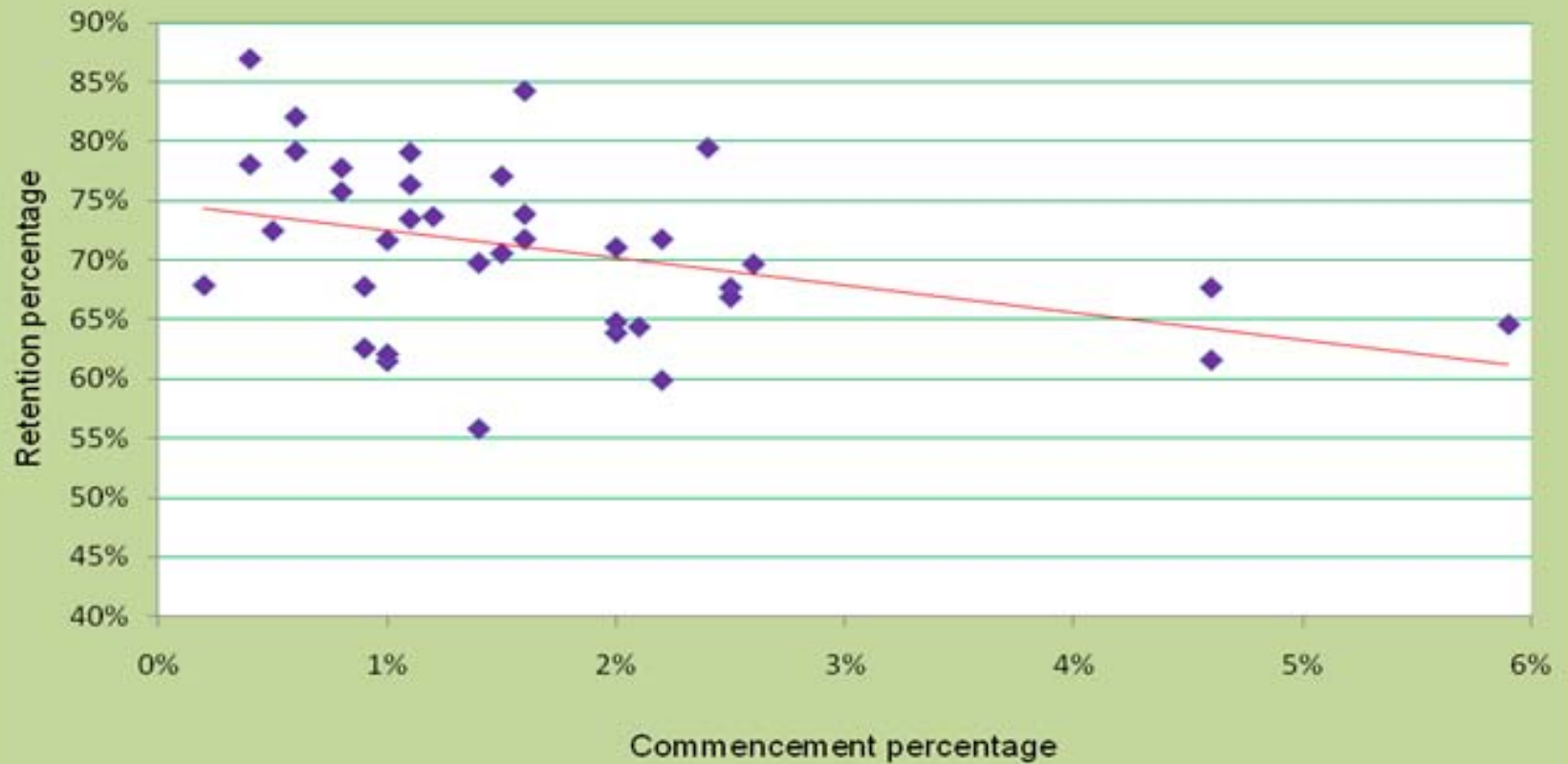
Left to Right Top: Professor Steve Larkin (Chair), Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Deputy Chair), Professor Ian Anderson, Ms Geraldine Atkinson, Associate Professor Ngiare Brown.
Left to Right Bottom: Professor Paul Chandler, Associate Professor Sue Green, Mr Russell Taylor, Dr Irene Watson, Mr Asmi Wood.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in Higher Education: Students

Indigenous Participation in Higher Education, 2001-2010 (% of all domestic students)



Commencement rates compared with retention rates of Indigenous Students (by institution)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in Higher Education: Staff

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing levels

Proportion of Indigenous people in the total Australian population	Higher education staff who identify as Indigenous	
2.5%	0.9%	Academic 324 Non-Academic 587 Total 911

Benefits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation

- Innovative, fresh perspectives in research
- Educational role-models for students from groups which are under-represented on campus
- All students enriched by embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency in the curriculum

What Causes Underrepresentation?

The invisible causes of disparity, including:

- *Intellectual exclusion*
- *Devaluation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methodologies and ways of knowing*
- *Subjective pedagogical approaches*
- *Invisible bias in merit processes*

Key message:

“Dominant epistemologies, pedagogical approaches, and ways of knowing combine with subjective merit systems to create an invisible fog which inhibits our ability to create a racially inclusive academy.”

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Endorsed by the Australian Government in April 2009
- Articulates the importance of resetting the relationship between Indigenous peoples, the broader community and government.
- Provides guidance on how to create an Australia where the rights and cultural differences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, protected and seen as a positive part of Australian culture and society.

Article 14: Education rights

- 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.*
- 2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.*
- 3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.*

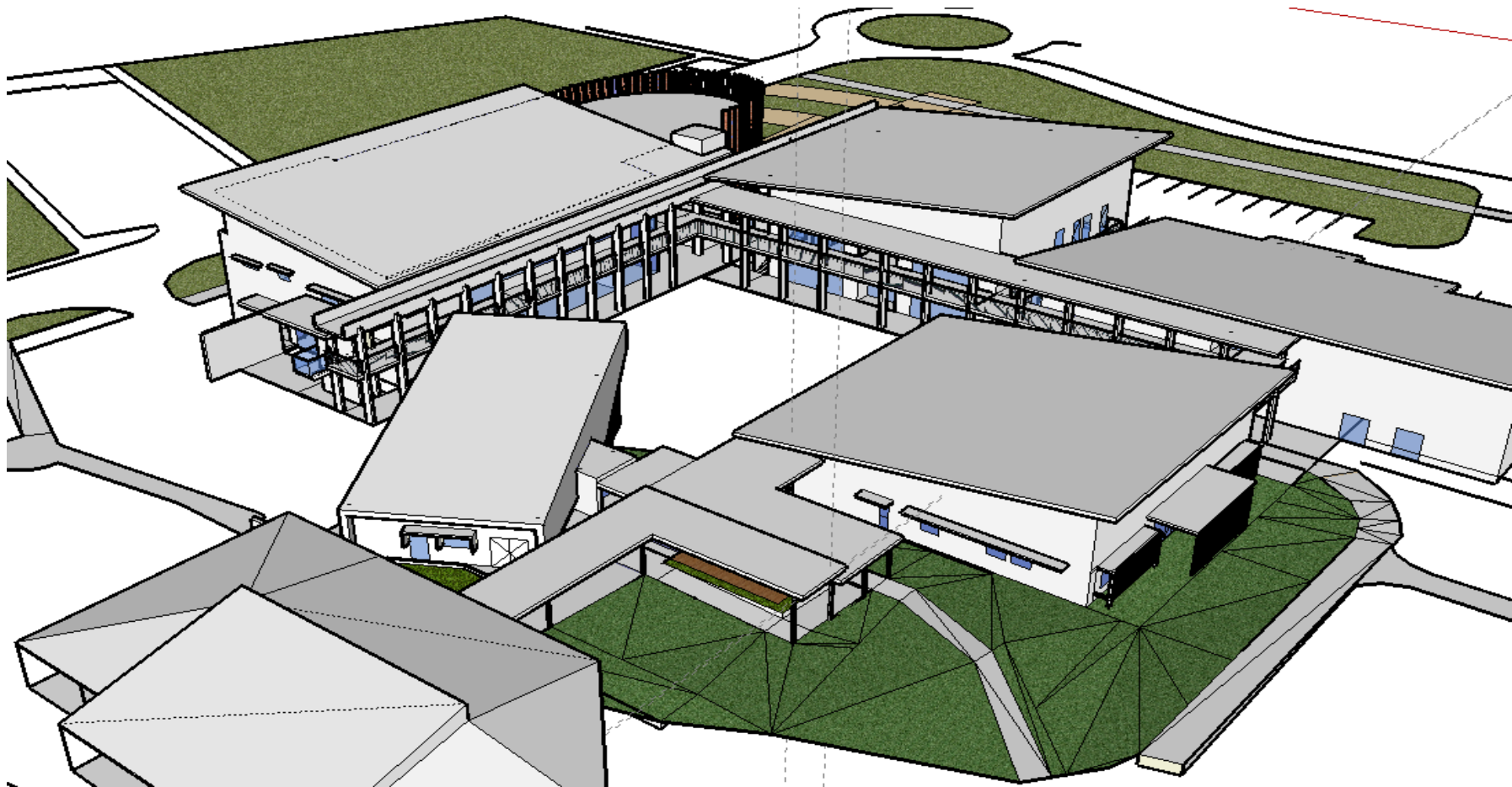
Article 15: Cultural rights

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.*
2. *States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.*

Article 21: Right to development

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.*
2. *States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.*

The Australian Centre of Indigenous Knowledge and Education



IHEAC initiatives to promote equivalence

- Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities Project with Universities Australia.
- Promotion of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Workforce Strategy.

Mending the Hole in our Pocket

We must address the hidden processes which pocket the landscape of higher education and discourage ongoing participation by those from non-Western backgrounds

Questions & References

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