

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Eighteenth Session – New York  
22 April – 3 May 2019**

**Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum**

**Delivered by: Jumbunna Institute, University of Technology Sydney**

---

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair,

I pay my respects to the Original custodian of the land we meet on today. We also acknowledge our Indigenous brothers and sisters from Australia and around the world who are here today.

Jumbunna would like to bring to this forum's attention, the employment situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Despite being a wealthy country, our people have poorer employment outcomes than most Australians.

This is the case despite the Close the Gap targets, where employment is not on track and investment in Indigenous procurement schemes and business more generally. These are positive initiatives but much more remains to be done.

We need a renewed emphasis on better employment outcomes for our people that acknowledges what we have to offer, that provides real employment opportunities for all Indigenous people and that is flexible about culturally based employment.

But we must also call out the discriminatory employment schemes that persist in our country, particularly those such as the Community Development and Remote Jobs for Work programs. We must expand opportunities and definitions of work for our people, particularly in remote areas.

As an educational institution, we acknowledge the importance of education to closing the gap in employment outcomes. At UTS, we are proud to say that we are committed to growing the pipeline of students from all around the country who will go make important contributions in their communities and workplaces across Australia, including at UTS. We are also home to one of the largest Indigenous professor populations in our country.

Jumbunna has recently established the Indigenous Peoples and Work Research and Practice Hub to draw greater attention to Indigenous employment. It will do so by working with communities, employers and government to improve the workplace cultures, conditions and opportunities that Indigenous people enjoy.

Our nation has a history of excluding or discriminating against our people through policies of Stolen Wages or forced employment. The Hub will centre Indigenous



experiences and highlight the contributions that we have always made and call for the change that is needed in this space.

**Mr/Madam Chair, I make the following recommendations that the Permanent Forum through ECOSOC:**

- 1. Urge all States to work with Indigenous peoples to establish a national Indigenous employment sector.**
- 2. Urge all States to commit to supporting community led employment initiatives and to ending discriminatory employment practices in Indigenous communities.**