



Trailblazer
Recycling &
Clean Energy

TRaCE First Nations HDR Scholarship Program 2025

Become a First Nations clean energy leader with a higher degree research scholarship at the University of Newcastle.

The University of Newcastle is offering higher degree research (HDR) scholarships for First Nations students through its Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (TRaCE) program. These scholarships of \$52,232 p.a. will enable students from a wide-range of disciplines to research the impacts and opportunities of the clean energy transition for First Nations communities, ensuring that First Nations knowledge and perspectives are central to this transformation.

The program supports First Nations students work towards a MPhil or PhD degree, preparing them to become leaders in clean energy and reducing emissions.

Support you will receive

You'll have a strong support system to help you succeed in the Higher Degree Research (HDR) program. Here's what you can expect:

- **Financial Support:** You'll receive a competitive annual scholarship payment of \$52,352 p.a. for up to 4 years, with potential for a relocation reimbursement of up to \$1,500 and additional funding from industry.*
- **Supervision:** You'll receive expert guidance from academic supervisors to conduct the research, and the opportunity to work with industry partners or community.
- **Mentorship:** You'll benefit from strong leadership from First Nations academics and mentors.
- **Academic Support:** [The Wollotuka Institute](#) will help you develop your academic skills and support your well-being in a culturally safe environment.
- **Career Development:** You'll be part of the Doctoral Training Centre for Energy, which offers professional development training to help you build leadership skills and prepare for jobs after your research.

(* Students may work up to sixteen hours per week, between 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday, whilst still being a full-time student. For details see [Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Policy](#))

Research project

These scholarships are designed to attract students from diverse academic backgrounds and are not limited to STEM fields. We welcome applicants from disciplines such as law, economics, anthropology, sociology, and business. You can create your own clean energy research project or collaborate with a supervisor or industry partner to co-design a proposal.

Here are some example topics already identified:

- REZ Long-Term Benefits
- Rooftop Solar Challenges
- Training and Jobs
- Blueprint for First Nations Community Ownership



If you have your own research idea, talk to our team!

We'll help you decide which study option is best for you, and find a supervisor and industry partner for your project.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for this scholarship, you will need to:

- Identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and complete the University of Newcastle's Establishing Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander status process [here](#).
- Meet the [eligibility requirements](#) for either research MPhil or PhD degree. Significant work experience in a relevant sector may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

This program fosters a respectful and meaningful connection with First Nations knowledge in clean energy. It is led and designed by First Nations people, with support from passionate supervisors and industry partners. We invite applicants from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to apply.

This program aims to:

- **To enable Indigenous-led research** on clean energy transitions and projects.
- **Develop leadership pathways** and strengthen the First Nations research community.
- **Support research on clean energy** that aligns with the [First Nations Clean Energy Strategy](#).
- **Ensure First Nations communities benefit** from emissions reduction projects happening on Country, in line with Australia's national research goals.

Get in touch

If you would like to make an impact in the clean energy transition and you identify as a First Nations person, contact our team to find out how we can support you to become an HDR candidate.

Interested applicants should include scanned copies of their academic transcripts, CV, a brief statement of their research interests and if possible, a proposal that specifically links them to the research project.

Applications will close 31 December 2025.

To apply, visit the University website [here](#).

For more information, contact trace@newcastle.edu.au.

About the University of Newcastle

The University of Newcastle is proud to have a strong connection to First Nations communities, students, educators and Industry partners. Through the Wollotuka Institute, the University of Newcastle has forged a reputation as a leader in First Nations education in Australia and we continue to play a pivotal role in leading self-determination and social justice. We continue to draw strength from culture, communities and past journeys.

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Newcastle acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands within our footprint areas: Awabakal Nation, Darkinjung Nation, Biripai Nation, Worimi Nation, Wonnarua Nation and Eora Nation. We also pay respect to the wisdom of our Elders past and present.



University of Newcastle Students: Simone, Stefanie and Patrick.



A collaborative partnership between



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