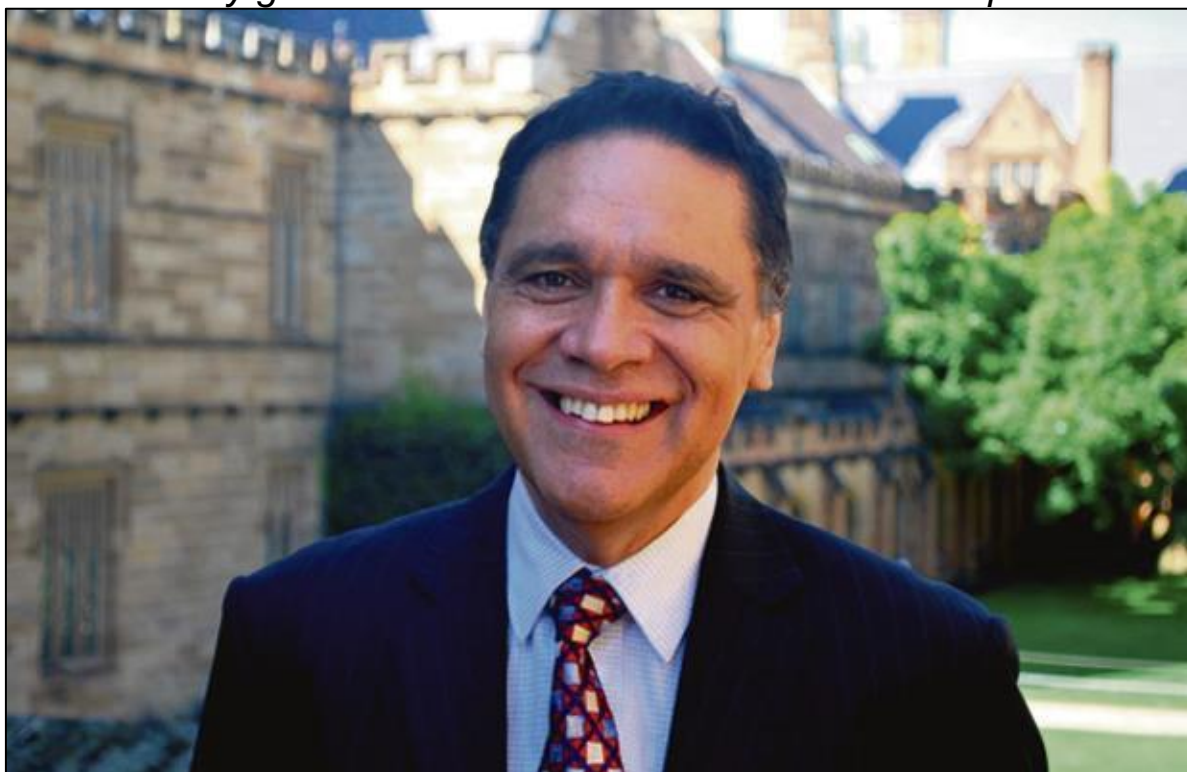


Honi Soit

Deputy Vice Chancellor suddenly stood down from the University

The University gave no reason as to Houston's sudden departure.



Former Deputy Vice Chancellor Shane Houston

by Natassia Chrysanthos
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Deputy Vice Chancellor Shane Houston has been suddenly stood down from his position at the University of Sydney, where he spearheaded the Indigenous Strategy and Services portfolio.

In an email sent to all staff on Thursday 24 August, Vice Chancellor Michael Spence said, “It is with regret and disappointment that I must advise that Professor Shane Houston will be stepping down from his role ... and leaving the University today.”

As Deputy Vice Chancellor, Houston was one of the most senior executives at the University, and the first Aboriginal person to hold such a role in an Australian university. *Honi* understands that his departure was a great shock to colleagues and other staff working at the University.

The position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) was created in 2011 to advance the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University, and to develop a framework for the University to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values into its programs and strategy.

At the time of his appointment, Houston said, “I want to bring the passion, energy and determination that were part of Aboriginal people’s lives throughout this history to the task of graduating future generations of Aboriginal and Australian leaders, and to finding answers to the many challenges facing Aboriginal people today.

“I want to help build a fair and more compassionate Australia.”

Houston came to the University with a distinguished background in the health sector, having worked closely with Aboriginal communities.

He led the University’s Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu Strategy, which has seen a 36 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University, and a near doubling of the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The National Centre for Cultural Competence was also founded under his tenure.

Houston’s departure coincides with the University’s replacement of Shane Perdue in the role of Director of Strategic Management in the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Strategies and Services); a key executive position under Houston’s portfolio. Of Native American descent, from the Cherokee people, Perdue has also been a key figure in reforming the Indigenous space at the University.

Houston and Perdue jointly pioneered the University’s Service Learning in Indigenous Communities program, which is a world-first in sending students to remote Indigenous communities each semester to work on long-term projects in conjunction with local stakeholders.

The University gave no reason as to Houston’s sudden departure.