

## Aboriginal Education and Training Policy

Approved by: Director, Safety Wellbeing & Inclusion

Approval date: 13 June 2025

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### Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, TAFE NSW acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

## Section 1. Purpose

TAFE NSW is committed to:

- promoting the strength and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- improving the educational outcomes and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in learning environments that are fair, equitable and culturally inclusive.

This Aboriginal Education and Training Policy will contribute to this vision by:

- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- ensuring that TAFE NSW staff have the training and skills to ensure culturally appropriate classrooms and adapt teaching methods to Aboriginal ways of learning.

### 1.1 Policy principles

TAFE NSW is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and ensuring that TAFE NSW teachers have the training and skills to ensure culturally appropriate classrooms. The commitments in this policy are based on the following principles:

#### 1.1.1 Self-determination

TAFE NSW acknowledges and respects the right to self-determination of each Aboriginal community and individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student. We will work with Aboriginal communities and advisory groups to understand the needs and aspirations of each community and adapt our ways of working to ensure that our education and training programs are best suited to each community. This means ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded in TAFE NSW ways of working, curriculum and delivery practices.

#### 1.1.2 Holistic approach to education

TAFE NSW will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to ensure that their educational experience promotes their social and emotional wellbeing and promotes their individual needs and aspirations.

### 1.1.3 Sustainable employment opportunities

TAFE NSW is committed to providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with an education that will result in sustainable life outcomes. This includes providing culturally appropriate learning pathways in in-demand industries, so students have opportunities to build long-term sustainable careers in industries in which they want to work.

## Section 2. Scope

- 2.1.1 The policy applies to all employees of TAFE NSW and programs operated by TAFE NSW are expected to operate in line with this policy.
- 2.1.2 TAFE NSW is responsible for implementation and maintenance of this policy.
- 2.1.3 TAFE NSW will work with each of the Aboriginal Community Reference Groups to develop the implementation plans.
- 2.1.4 TAFE NSW will report annually to the NSW Department of Education and Communities and Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations on the key outcomes of the policy and its implementation from the previous year.
- 2.1.5 All staff are responsible for implementing the policy and ensuring their actions comply with it.

## Section 3. Policy statements

### 3.1 Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives at TAFE NSW

- 3.1.1 TAFE NSW is committed to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives in ways of working, curriculum development and delivery practices.
- 3.1.2 In order to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives at TAFE NSW, TAFE NSW will:
  - Engage in collaborative decision making with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families and communities in all planning and decision making on topics that relate to or impact them. This includes following the co-design and consultation framework used to develop this policy. ([See section 3.4](#))
  - Establish governance models that allow opportunities for continuous feedback loops where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives can inform continuous improvement.
  - Increase employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in a broad range of positions across TAFE NSW, through the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.
  - Commit to employing teachers with demonstrated Aboriginal cultural awareness.
  - Scope opportunities to provide cultural and study leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

- Provide Aboriginal cultural education for all staff and education about Aboriginal Australia for all students. This includes opportunities for deeper understandings of Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages.
- Provide for all staff to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of local Aboriginal history and people.
- Seek opportunities for each TAFE NSW campus to connect with the local Aboriginal community including becoming involved in community-led projects and events.
- Ensure that all significant events and important meetings include an Acknowledgement of Country, or Welcome to Country, as appropriate.

### 3.2 TAFE NSW supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

3.2.1 TAFE NSW will develop diverse pathways into TAFE NSW to suit the needs of different students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may come from a range of life stages and have varying goals for their education. For example, they may be school leavers looking to further their education and skills to build careers in their chosen field; they might be mid-career professionals looking to up-skill or change career direction; or they may be Elders interested in taking an Aboriginal language course. These students all require different entry pathways into TAFE NSW.

3.2.2 TAFE NSW will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by:

- ensuring the first point of contact with TAFE NSW is culturally safe, including fast referrals to contact points with culturally competent staff
- embedding cultural context, values and practices of local Aboriginal communities into the mainstream delivery of education and training
- building supportive and culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- providing practical supports for students include through Aboriginal student support, subsidised training places and fee exemptions, scholarships or other financial help
- ensuring that assessment practices and resources are culturally inclusive.

3.2.3 TAFE NSW is committed to:

- increasing participation and retention of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- delivering training solutions that are authentic, culturally appropriate and culturally safe
- engaging and motivating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for successful participation in education and training
- increasing the employment opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates by developing programs tailored to the needs of the community.

### 3.3 Development of staff cultural capability

3.3.1 TAFE NSW commits to providing continuous professional learning and career development experiences for all staff to develop their cultural capability.

- 3.3.2 TAFE NSW will engage with their network of Aboriginal advisory groups as partners when developing or seeking appropriate education and training opportunities for staff. This includes consultation to:
- identify gaps in skills and capability in specific areas in TAFE NSW or identifying opportunities for improved capability
  - define what professional learning and development opportunities are appropriate to remedy those gaps
  - select appropriate service providers to deliver education and training.
- 3.3.3 TAFE is also committed to developing strategies to review teaching methodologies, and respond to student feedback, to improve curriculum and delivery practices and make them more responsive to Aboriginal ways of learning.

## Section 4. Responsibilities

### 4.1 Co-design and consultation of this policy and its implementation

- 4.1.1 TAFE NSW's methodology for policy development ensures that both the policy and the practical implementation is co-designed by Aboriginal-led advisory groups.
- 4.1.2 This is a policy developed under TAFE NSW Closing the Gap Action Plan and the TAFE NSW's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in alignment with the Diversity and Inclusion Policy Framework. As with the other framework policies, this policy applies state-wide. It will then be implemented organisationally through implementation plans, engagement plans, procedures and How do I? guides.
- 4.1.3 This state-wide policy is developed with the TAFE NSW Aboriginal Strategic Leadership Group (ASLG). The ASLG meets quarterly, and a standing agenda item is to discuss this policy.
- 4.1.4 The subsequent implementation plans will be developed with the TAFE NSW Aboriginal Community Reference Groups in alignment with the TAFE NSW community groups.

## Section 5. Governance information

Governance	Details
Legislation, regulations, and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <a href="#">Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</a></li> <li>b. <a href="#">National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)</a></li> <li>c. <a href="#">The National Indigenous Reform Agreement (2022)</a></li> <li>d. <a href="#">Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 (NSW)</a></li> <li>e. <a href="#">NSW Anti-discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</a></li> <li>f. <a href="#">Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990 (NSW)</a></li> <li>g. <a href="#">The Report of the Aboriginal Education Review Yanigurra Muya: Ganggurrinyrna Yaarri GuurulawYirringin.gurray Freeing the Spirit: Dreaming an Equal Future (2004)</a></li> <li>h. <a href="#">Premier's Priorities</a></li> <li>i. <a href="#">NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy</a></li> </ul>
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <a href="#">TAFE NSW Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025</a></li> <li>b. <a href="#">TAFE NSW Closing the Gap Action Plan - TAFE NSW Closing the Gap Action Plan – Horizon 3 – Building on strong foundations</a></li> </ul>
Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Director, Safety Wellbeing & Inclusion
Content Manager number	PD/2008/0385/V02
Next review date	13 June 2028

## Section 6. Document history

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1	1982	Unknown	The first release focused on the advancement of Aboriginal communities and an appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and societies by other Australians.
2	1996	Unknown	Updated to include three focus areas: Aboriginal students Aboriginal communities All staff, students and schools.

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
3	2003	Unknown	<p>Updated as an action within the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy 2006-2008.</p> <p>Extensive consultations and feedback on the draft were supported by the Department and the NSW AECG Inc. Feedback was received from 189 group and individual submissions. More than 1000 people were involved.</p>
4	18 November 2008	<p>Director—General of Education</p> <p>Managing Director of TAFE NSW</p>	<p>Main updates:</p> <p>This policy applies to all sectors of public education and all Departmental employees, not just to the school sector.</p> <p>The policy articulates the Department's commitments to Aboriginal education and training in response to the Aboriginal Education Review.</p> <p>Specific actions to be undertaken to respond to the 71 recommendations of the Aboriginal Education Review are specified in the Aboriginal Education Strategy 2006-2008 which is an implementation document for the policy.</p> <p>Specific responsibilities for staff are included.</p> <p>Monitoring will occur through the Director, Aboriginal Education and Training.</p> <p>The policy complies with the format now required for all Departmental policies.</p>
5	13 June 2025	Director Safety, Wellbeing & Inclusion	<p>Immaterial updates: correction to hyperlinks and position titles to reflect TAFE NSW operational model 2025, update to current TAFE NSW template. Policy updated in alignment with recommendations from Aboriginal Support Structure Review. Co-designed with Aboriginal stakeholders and drafted by Terrie Janke &amp; Co.</p>