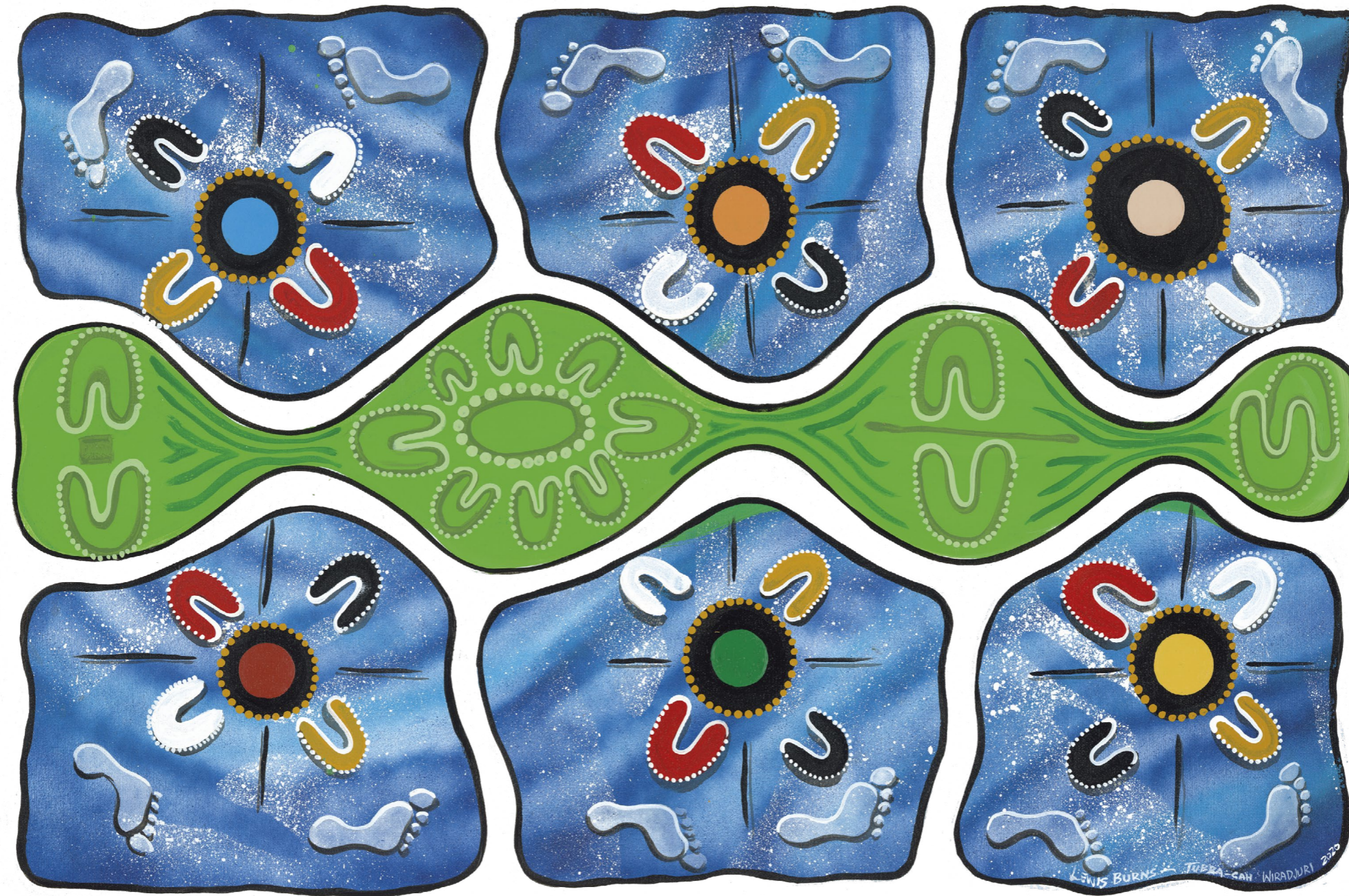


Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

June 2026 - June 2028



Acknowledgement of Country

TAFE NSW acknowledges Aboriginal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located and where we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters, and seas, as well as their rich contribution to society.

We recognise that Aboriginal cultures and communities form the foundation of cultural diversity within New South Wales. Hundreds of cultures, languages, and kinship structures have long been embedded in the lands of Aboriginal Countries throughout the state. We acknowledge and celebrate these diverse traditions, customs, and cultures that have existed for more than 60,000 years.

TAFE NSW will continue to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and promote their rights and interests. In doing so, we acknowledge the wrongs of the past, respect the Cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and commit to embedding equality and equity throughout all areas of TAFE NSW by integrating inclusive and innovative opportunities that will result in stronger relationships built on respect and trust.

Disclaimer: For the purposes of this document, use of the term 'Aboriginal' is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Contents

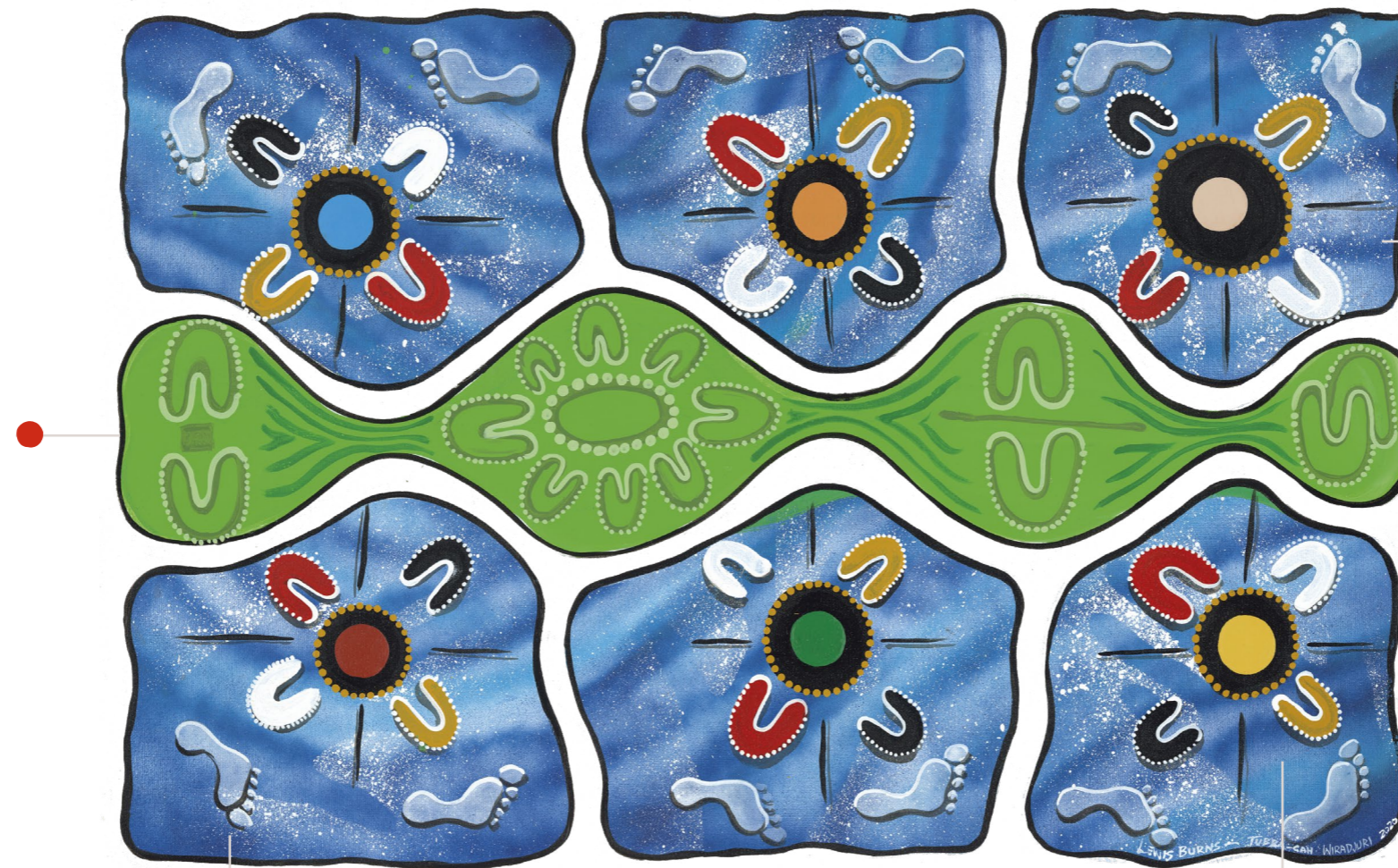
Reconciliation Artwork and Design	2
About the Artist Lewis Burns	4
Message from the Managing Director	6
Message from Reconciliation Australia	8
Our Organisation	11
Aboriginal Cultures and Languages in NSW	12
TAFE NSW Footprint	14
Our Reconciliation Action Plan	16
Our Vision for Reconciliation	16
Our Reconciliation Action Plan Journey	17
How our Reconciliation Action Plan works with Closing the Gap	18
Relationships	23
Respect	29
Opportunities	35
Governance	41

Reconciliation Artwork and Design

The green centre represents the Reconciliation Action Plan framework, with the three pillars of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities built on a foundation of Governance.

- The opportunities pillar (located at the far left of the green centre segment) represents people sitting in front of an opportunity being presented on the table.
- The Governance foundation (in the second segment) represents people sitting together to discuss ideas, make decisions, ask questions, create, innovate and collaborate. It also reflects TAFE NSW's commitment to bringing people together to focus on the customer first.
- The respect pillar (in the third segment) shows respect, keeping distance, and understanding.
- The relationships pillar (at the far right) represents people sitting close together, trusting, and hugging.

The footprints represent the long journey it has taken to get to reconciliation. The many years of indifference are being overcome by negotiation, education, understanding, and the sharing of Knowledge.



'Reconciliation belongs to everyone.'

This Reconciliation Artwork is displayed on every TAFE NSW campus across the state as part of our commitment to Reconciliation.

The six components represent the six community groups of TAFE NSW:

- Online - Yellow Ochre - Strength
- North - Blue - Clarity
- South - Green - Depth
- Sydney - Beige - Resilience
- West - Red Ochre - Honour
- Western Sydney - Orange Ochre - Empowerment

The six community groups are compartmentalised as three at the top of the artwork and three at the bottom. Inside the communities, the symbols represent the people of the world of all skins colours (red, yellow, black, and white), and allows for self-determination in decision making for their own lives (choices to be made). The people also represent coming together and promoting reconciliation.

The handprints represent ancestors. In this painting, the artist has used the handprints of his mother; Aunty Dorothy Burns, a Dubbo Community Elder. The circles traditionally represent the campfire, the white line represents the heat from the fire, and the dots around the people represent the life force of that person.

About the Artist

Lewis Burns



Lewis Burns is a Tubba-Gah Wiradjuri man, born and living in Dubbo, NSW. He has been learning about his Aboriginal Culture for as long as he can remember. He continues to practice and respect these life skills each day, and Lewis still learns and grows from this ancient Knowledge.

Lewis' love of his heritage is evident when you speak with him, and is depicted even more in his Aboriginal crafts, traditional dancing, didgeridoo performances, mural paintings, and in his teaching. He is very dedicated to sharing what he knows with others, helping to keep these customs alive.

Lewis paints in traditional Wiradjuri Aboriginal, as well as in contemporary styles. He has exhibited and performed globally with his handcrafted didgeridoos. Each piece of Lewis' artwork tells a story - a story that will live on forever, throughout the generations, as the artwork is handed down from one family to another.

Lewis Burns has attended many festivals representing Australian Aboriginal Culture. After seeing the Cultural emersion at "Lo Spirito Del Pianeta" in Italy, Lewis wanted to bring The Spirit Dream to his own homeland. His dream is to create, here in Australia, the same sense of inclusion, connectedness, unity, and respect for all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that he felt and experienced while in Italy – despite the language barriers.



Message from the Managing Director



I am proud to present the TAFE NSW Reconciliation Action Plan 2026-2028.

Our new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) demonstrates our strong, continuing commitment to shape a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples exercise self-determination in education, training and employment, and where their cultures, knowledges and leadership are central to who we are and how we work.

As the state's public vocational education and training provider, educating more than 37,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students each year and employing 420 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, we have an enviable opportunity to break down barriers, support truth-telling, and ensure the future of our organisation, the communities we serve, is shaped by Reconciliation.

For nearly 200 years TAFE NSW has grown and evolved alongside the needs of industry and communities but this history has unfolded on Aboriginal lands, within systems that have not always recognised or valued the knowledge, cultures, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This RAP marks an important step forward. It's our commitment to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples so everyone can learn, work, and thrive in culturally safe and responsive TAFE NSW environments.

It builds on work we have already started, including our Closing the Gap Action Plan 2025-2028, and aligns with the Reconciliation framework developed by Reconciliation Australia. It shows our commitment to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, weaving Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing into our teaching and operations, and making sure we are accountable for real, lasting change.

Reconciliation is more than goodwill – it requires sustained, courageous, and culturally grounded action which is why this plan supports Aboriginal leadership, empowerment, and co-design, so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not just asked for input, they are leading, shaping, and influencing TAFE NSW decisions that affect them and their communities.

Delivering on this plan will require us to walk together, listening deeply, acting with integrity, be honest about progress and where we still need to do better.

We move forward, knowing meaningful Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that asks us to keep learning, keep improving, and stay committed to building a more equitable future for everyone.

Handwritten signature of Chloe Read in black ink.

Chloe Read
Managing Director, TAFE NSW



Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia commends TAFE NSW on their third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

With over 5.5 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. TAFE NSW continues to be part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and transformed it into action.

The four RAP types – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – allow RAP partners to continuously strengthen reconciliation commitments and constantly strive to apply learnings in new ways.

An Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build the strong foundations and relationships that ensure sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

An integral part of building these foundations is reflecting on and cataloguing the successes and challenges of previous RAPs. Learnings gained through effort and innovation are invaluable resources that TAFE NSW will continuously draw upon to create RAP commitments rooted in experience and maturity.

These learnings extend to TAFE NSW using the lens of reconciliation to better understand its core business, sphere of influence, and diverse community of staff and stakeholders.

The RAP program's emphasis on relationships, respect, and opportunities gives organisations a framework from which to foster connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rooted in mutual collaboration and trust.

This Innovate RAP is an opportunity for TAFE NSW to strengthen these relationships, gain crucial experience, and nurture connections that will become the lifeblood of its future RAP commitments. By enabling and empowering staff to contribute to this process, TAFE NSW will ensure shared and cooperative success in the long-term.

Gaining experience and reflecting on pertinent learnings will ensure the sustainability of TAFE NSW's future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, providing meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations TAFE NSW on your third Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.



Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia



Dubbo,
Traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people

Our Organisation



TAFE NSW is the state's public vocational education and training provider. Our purpose, defined by the TAFE NSW Charter (2025), is to deliver high-quality training that builds the state's skills base and drives social and economic objectives. We hold a vital community service obligation to ensure equitable access to education for those facing barriers to participation.

Each year, we educate over 364,000 students, including more than 37,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Our statewide workforce of 15,000 employees includes over 420 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who deliver training and support across metropolitan, regional, and remote communities (as at 30 June 2025).

Our sphere of influence is extensive. Internally, our leaders and governance bodies shape how education is designed and experienced. Externally, we partner with employers, industry, government agencies, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to embed inclusive, culturally safe practices across the NSW economy.

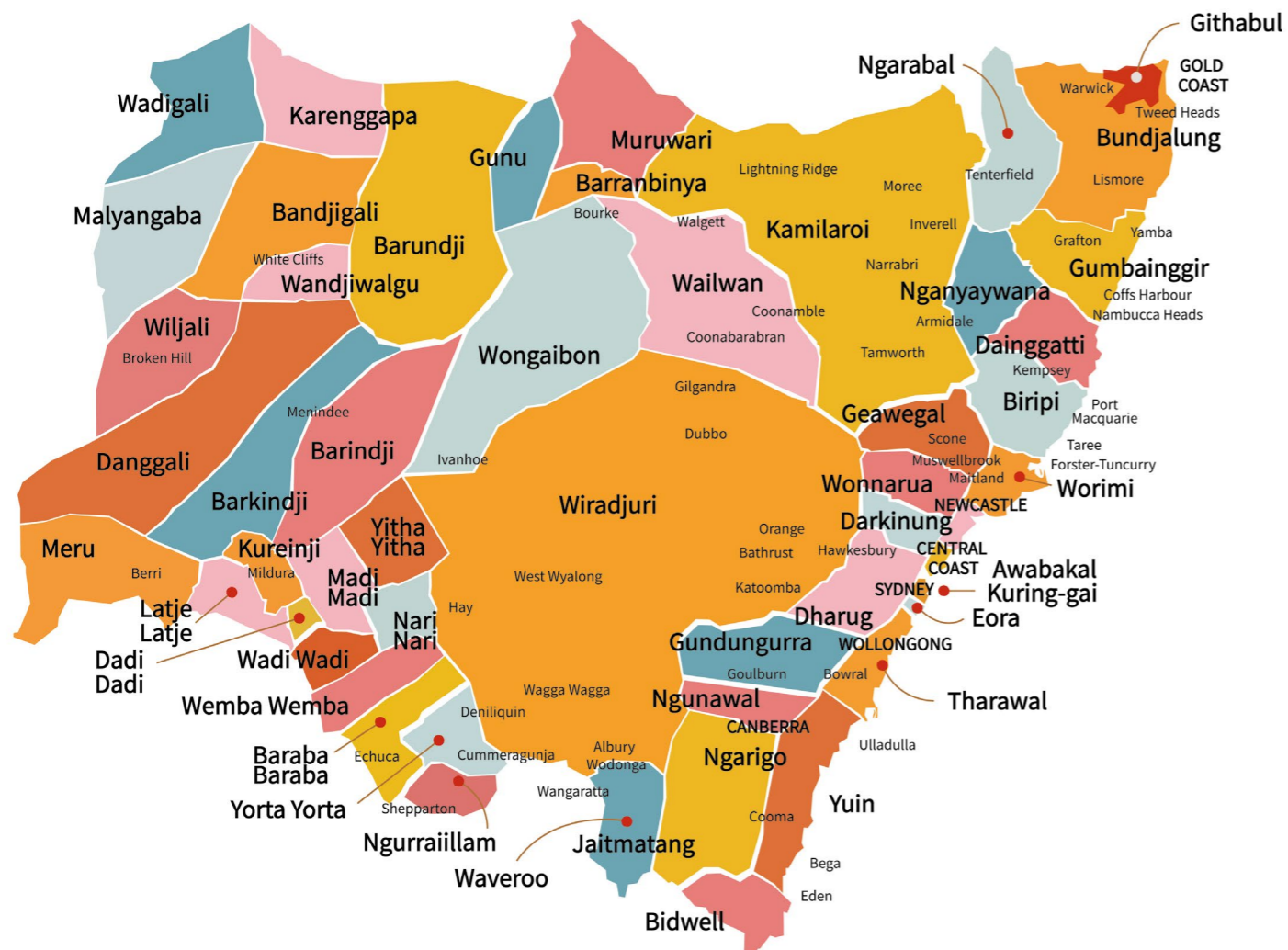
Our values underpin our commitment to Reconciliation:

- **Excellence:** Continuously improving programs to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal students and communities.
- **Integrity:** Ensuring accountability, trust, and transparency in our partnerships.
- **Customer Focus:** Delivering accessible and culturally safe learning environments.
- **Collaboration:** Working respectfully with Aboriginal communities and partners through shared decision-making.



Aboriginal Cultures and Languages in NSW

NSW is made up of around 70 different Aboriginal Nations, each with their own language or Language Group. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, language is not merely a means of communication, it is an important medium through which Culture is carried across generations. Aboriginal languages are at high risk of becoming lost. Everyone can play a role in revitalising these languages by learning and using them.



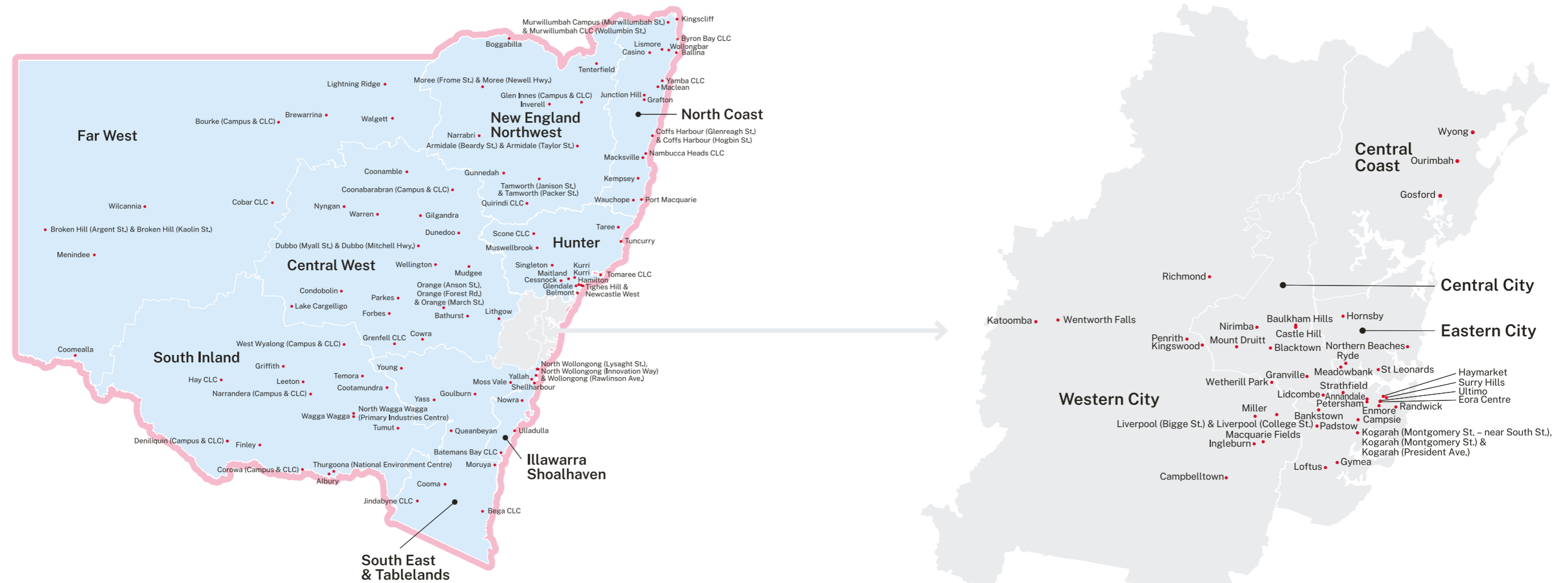
Map and information from Reconciliation NSW: www.schoolsreconciliationchallenge.org.au



TAFE NSW Footprint



At TAFE NSW, we are dedicated to helping students in local communities thrive by offering courses online and at over 150 locations around the state. Whether you're interested in the trades, technology, healthcare, or a creative field, we've designed our campuses with the needs of our students and industry in mind.



- TAFE Digital footprint
- TAFE NSW Community Group boundaries
- CLC Connected Learning Centre
- Delivery locations

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Vision for Reconciliation

TAFE NSW's vision for Reconciliation is a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples exercise self-determination in education, training and employment, and where their cultures, knowledges and leadership are central to who we are and how we work.

Reconciliation for TAFE NSW means:

- **Truth-telling and justice** - We acknowledge the histories, injustices and ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and commit to creating spaces for truth-telling, healing and respectful dialogue.
- **Respect for Country, culture and sovereignty** - We honour the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country, and respect their rights, cultures, languages and lore as a strength that enriches our organisation and communities.
- **Genuine partnerships and shared decision-making** - We commit to listening to, and working with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations as partners in governance and decision-making about the policies, programs and environments that affect them.
- **Equity, cultural safety and belonging** - We will build culturally safe learning and working environments where racism is actively identified and eliminated, where cultural diversity is valued, and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and communities feel a strong sense of safety, inclusion and belonging.
- **Transformative change through education** - We will use our role as a public education provider to challenge structural inequality, remove barriers to participation, and expand opportunities, so that education and training contribute to intergenerational prosperity, wellbeing and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through this vision, Reconciliation at TAFE NSW is not a single initiative or plan. It is an ongoing, organisation-wide commitment to changing our relationships, systems and practices, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can thrive, now and into the future.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Journey

TAFE NSW's Reconciliation journey began with our first statewide Innovate RAP in 2020, which unified local efforts into a coordinated framework. A key milestone was the co-design of the Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework, which has since embedded a consistent approach to cultural safety across the organisation.

Our progress reflects measurable growth. Between 2022 and 2025, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment rose to 37,300, while Aboriginal staff numbers increased by 23.4% to 427 employees. Economic participation has been a priority; between 2023 and 2025, TAFE NSW spent over \$41 million with Aboriginal businesses, supported by Aboriginal procurement targets.

During the 2023–2025 RAP period, we strengthened organisational capability through 170 National Reconciliation Week events and the participation of over 2,500 employees in cultural capability programs.

Initiatives like the 'Paid to Learn' program (9% Aboriginal participation) have further supported pathways into teaching.

Our RAP is reinforced by a broader strategic ecosystem, including the TAFE NSW Strategic Plan, the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan, and our Closing the Gap Action Plan. These are supported by the Aboriginal Staff Network, which ensures Aboriginal voices are heard and valued across the organisation.

While we celebrate this progress, we recognise our journey is ongoing. This next RAP draws on previous lessons to refocus our actions, improve accountability, and ensure our commitments translate into tangible change for Aboriginal students, staff, and communities.



How our Reconciliation Action Plan works with Closing the Gap

Our Reconciliation Action Plan does not sit in isolation. It is designed to work alongside, and in support of, our broader strategic commitments to equity and success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – particularly through our Closing the Gap Action Plan.

The TAFE NSW Strategic Plan 2022–2025 sets our overall direction and clarifies our role in advancing equity and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities. Underneath this, Group level plans translate those directions into specific priorities and actions. Our RAP and Closing the Gap Action Plan are key mechanisms through which we deliver on these priorities.

Our RAP focuses on building respectful relationships, cultural safety and meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, communities and businesses. It strengthens how we:

- work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and leadership.
- embed cultural capability across our workforce.
- grow economic participation through our procurement and education offerings.

Our Closing the Gap Action Plan has a more specific focus on addressing inequity in educational outcomes and participation. It guides how we:

- design and deliver culturally responsive teaching and support.
- partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in planning, delivery and evaluation.
- target resources to address systemic barriers and create supportive learning environments.
- promote lifelong learning pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

These two plans are deliberately complementary. The RAP sets the organisation wide foundations of relationships, respect, opportunities and strong governance. The Closing the Gap Action Plan builds on those foundations with targeted, outcomes focused actions to improve access, participation, progression and completion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Other key frameworks and strategies help to align and reinforce this work::

- The **Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan 2023–2027** provides a roadmap for making TAFE NSW a place where everyone feels respected and that they belong, with a strong focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students and communities. (Next Review December 2027).
- The **Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework** sets out the skills, knowledge and behaviours staff need to work in culturally informed and respectful ways. It is mapped to the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework and underpins how we embed cultural safety into everyday work, policies, programs and services. (Next Review December 2026).
- The **Aboriginal Employment Strategy** focuses on growing and supporting Aboriginal employment at TAFE NSW, strengthening workforce diversity so that our staff better reflect, understand and serve Aboriginal students and communities. (Next Review December 2027).
- The **Aboriginal Participation Strategy** provides a framework for recognising, engaging and supporting Aboriginal businesses, and is closely aligned to the Innovate RAP focus areas of Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance. (Next Review March 2027).
- The **Aboriginal Staff Network** is a strong, culturally grounded community that offers a safe and proud space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to connect, support each other and lead across the organisation, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard, respected and amplified.

Together, our RAP, Closing the Gap Action Plan and these supporting strategies form an integrated approach. They ensure that reconciliation principles are embedded in our strategic direction, our workforce, our teaching and support, our partnerships, and our procurement – and that our commitments translate into coordinated, measurable change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Success stories



Chris is a proud Ngemba man living and working on Ngemba Country. As a water and sewerage operator and plumber, he is committed to building a strong future for himself, his family and his community through education and hard work.

Chris's journey with TAFE NSW has been both personally and professionally rewarding. While completing his Certificate III in Plumbing at TAFE NSW Tamworth, he developed valuable hands-on skills, industry knowledge and confidence in his abilities. Travelling more than five hours from Brewarrina to attend block training, Chris showed strong dedication to his goals. With the support of teachers and staff, he has grown not only in his trade but also as a leader within his workplace and community. He has since commenced further study and is working towards gaining his plumbing licence.

Chris hopes his story encourages others to take up opportunities to learn and grow, no matter where they come from. He wants students and community members to see that with commitment, support and determination, it is possible to achieve their goals and create positive outcomes for themselves, their families and their communities.

Chris believes Reconciliation plays an important role in education and workplaces like TAFE NSW. For him, it is about building understanding, respect and stronger relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. He sees it as essential to creating environments where everyone feels valued, included and supported, and where Aboriginal culture, knowledge and voices are recognised.

He encourages others to contribute to Reconciliation by listening, learning and showing respect. Chris highlights that even small actions such as having open conversations, supporting inclusion and being willing to learn can make a meaningful difference.

Chris reminds us that Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility. By working together, respecting culture and continuing to learn, we can create stronger communities and a more inclusive future for all.



Chris Frail (He/Him)

Ngemba man – Living on Ngemba Country

Water and Sewerage Operator / Plumber



TAFE Manufacturing teacher and students,
Darug Country

Relationships



TAFE NSW is committed to building strong, respectful and enduring relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations. We recognise that genuine reconciliation is grounded in partnership, trust and shared decision-making.

To achieve this, we are focused on working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to co-design education and training that reflects community priorities, strengthens self-determination and creates pathways to opportunity. We are committed to embedding cultural safety across our organisation, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and partners feel respected, heard and safe in all their interactions with TAFE NSW.

We also recognise our responsibility to actively challenge racism and discrimination, and to hold ourselves accountable for creating environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can thrive. This means listening, learning, and being willing to change how we work based on what communities tell us.

Through meaningful engagement, formalised partnerships, visible leadership and a clear stance against racism, we will continue to strengthen the relationships that underpin everything we do. When programs, policies and partnerships are developed and implemented in genuine collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, mutually beneficial and sustainable outcomes are achieved.



Focus Areas

1. Community engagement and co-design:

TAFE NSW will engage regularly and meaningfully with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), embedding formal co-design processes that ensure community voice leads the design, delivery, and evaluation of Aboriginal-focused programs and formalising these priority partnerships through clear principles and shared governance.

2. Cultural safety and anti-racism in relationships:

TAFE NSW will implement a comprehensive anti-racism policy and culturally safe complaints pathways to protect the dignity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while building leadership capability to ensure that all external and internal relationships are free from discrimination and grounded in truth-telling.

Action	Deliverable	Impact	Timeline	Responsibility
a. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Build strong, ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations through regular meetings and co-design processes.	Enduring, respectful partnerships that enable co-designed education and training aligned to community priorities. Programs and policies affecting Aboriginal people are co-designed, not imposed.	December 2027 (ongoing)	Chief Student & Community Officer
b. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Celebrate National Reconciliation Week each year by sharing resources, running events, and supporting staff to join community-led activities.	Increased staff awareness of reconciliation and strengthened relationships through National Reconciliation Week participation.	May 2026 (ongoing)	Chief People Officer
c. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Create a framework to help staff understand and participate in reconciliation activities, with regular updates on RAP progress.	Staff understand reconciliation and actively participate in RAP initiatives, creating a culture of reconciliation across the organisation.	December 2026	Managing Director
	Include reconciliation expectations in contracts with partners and suppliers, and share our RAP progress publicly.	Reconciliation expectations extend beyond TAFE NSW to its ecosystem. Partners adopt culturally safe practices influenced by TAFE NSW.	June 2027	Chief Operating Officer
	Partner with other organisations on reconciliation projects and attend Reconciliation Australia leadership events to share and learn.	A more mature, evidence-informed reconciliation practice sustained across RAP cycles through benchmarking and shared learning.	December 2027	Managing Director
d. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Create clear anti-racism policies and safe complaint pathways where Aboriginal staff and students can report racism and cultural harm without fear.	Reduced racism and cultural harm through clear policies and safe, effective complaint pathways that Aboriginal staff and students trust.	September 2027	Chief People Officer
	Make anti-racism training mandatory for executives and senior leaders, and require leaders to visibly support anti-racism initiatives.	Leadership demonstrates commitment to anti-racism, creating cultural change from the top and modelling expected behaviours.	March 2028	Chief People Officer

Success stories



Ash is a proud Ngemba, Kujnya and Barkinji woman living and working on Kamilaroi Country in Tamworth. As a Teacher in Aboriginal Health and an Endorsed Enrolled Nurse, she is passionate about supporting Aboriginal students and strengthening pathways into health careers.

Ash's journey with TAFE NSW has been both personal and rewarding. With strong family connections to Bourke and having grown up in Inverell, her experiences have shaped her commitment to creating change. She began her career in nursing with a clear purpose to break down barriers between Aboriginal communities and mainstream health services. Her work has taken her across the country, where she has seen both the strengths within communities and the gaps that still exist. Now in education, Ash is proud to guide and support others, particularly Aboriginal students, into meaningful careers in health.

Ash hopes her story shows that no matter where you come from, you can create opportunities for yourself and your community. Inspired by her parents, who made the decision to change the trajectory of their lives by moving from Bourke to Inverell for opportunities, she is driven to see the same possibilities for her family and community. She wants young people, including her nieces, nephews and cousins, to see that they can step confidently into these spaces. For Ash, making a difference even for one person is a powerful outcome.

Ash believes Reconciliation is essential in education and workplaces like TAFE NSW because it builds understanding, respect and trust. She sees it as key to ensuring Aboriginal people feel culturally safe, supported and valued, while also creating real opportunities for success and representation. Without this shared understanding, meaningful progress is difficult.

She encourages others to contribute to Reconciliation by taking time to listen, learn and build genuine relationships with community. Ash emphasises that small, consistent actions such as showing respect, creating inclusive environments and supporting Aboriginal students and colleagues can all contribute to meaningful change.

Ash reminds us that Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility and must be driven by shared commitment across all levels. She is proud to now be in a position where she can support and educate future Aboriginal Health Practitioners. For Ash, being Aboriginal is a strength, and when that strength is recognised and supported, it creates real and lasting change for future generations.



Ash Lackay (She/Her)

Ngemba, Kujnya and Barkinji woman – Living on Kamilaroi Country
Teacher Aboriginal Health & Endorsed Enrolled Nurse



TAFE Plumbing students,
Darug Country

Respect



TAFE NSW is committed to understanding, valuing and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, rights and experiences as integral to who we are and what we do. We recognise that genuine respect is demonstrated through action, and that reconciliation requires us to acknowledge the wrongs of the past, understand their ongoing impacts, and actively work to address them.

We value the skills, knowledge and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise the strength, diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and we respect the deep and enduring connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to Country. We are committed to ensuring that these values are embedded across our organisation – in our policies, our practices, our learning environments and our everyday interactions.

Respect also means creating the conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to feel safe, valued and empowered. It means building the cultural capability of our workforce so that all staff understand their role in upholding cultural safety. It means designing spaces, protocols and support structures that honour culture and reflect community voice. And it means recognising and responding to the diverse and intersecting identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.

TAFE NSW is committed to delivering a culture where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples see their cultures reflected, their rights upheld, and their contributions celebrated. When respect is embedded in everything we do, we create an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and communities can thrive.

Focus Areas

1. Cultural capability and leadership accountability:

TAFE NSW will implement a co-designed Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework that defines clear expectations for all roles—from frontline staff to the Board—and ensures that leaders are held accountable through performance plans for their contributions to cultural safety and RAP outcomes.

2. Culturally safe environments and practices:

TAFE NSW will co-design and maintain yarning circles and culturally significant spaces across campuses, while updating cultural protocols and intersectional support guidelines to ensure that our daily operations, events, and learning environments are inclusive, respectful, and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions.

Action	Deliverable	Impact	Timeline	Responsibility
a. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Offer training to all staff in Aboriginal cultural awareness at levels appropriate to their role, from basic awareness to advanced leadership training.	A workforce that consistently demonstrates culturally safe behaviours and decisions, improving Aboriginal staff and student experience across campuses.	December 2027	Chief People Officer
	Create and maintain yarning circles and other culturally important spaces on campuses, designed with local Aboriginal communities, with clear guidelines for respectful use.	Cultural visibility and safety become embedded features of how TAFE NSW operates, supporting belonging and participation.	March 2028	Chief Student & Community Officer
	Create support guidelines for Aboriginal staff and students with diverse identities (disability, LGBTIQ+, multicultural, carers) in partnership with Aboriginal advisors.	More equitable outcomes and reduced compounding disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across diverse identities.	December 2027	Chief People Officer
b. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Follow proper Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols at events and meetings, guided by Traditional Owners (or appropriate representatives).	Consistent demonstration of respect for Aboriginal peoples and Traditional Owners through appropriate cultural protocols.	March 2027 (ongoing)	Managing Director
c. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Support staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events by removing scheduling barriers and encouraging attendance at community celebrations.	Increased cultural awareness and respect through NAIDOC Week engagement and celebration.	September 2027	Managing Director

Success stories



The Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy (IFARES) is a partnership between TAFE NSW and Fire and Rescue NSW that creates a culturally safe, job-linked pathway into emergency services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Co-designed and led by Aboriginal staff, the program integrates accredited training, recruitment readiness, mentoring and wrap-around support to remove barriers to employment. Cultural safety is embedded through Aboriginal leadership, community guidance, cohort-based delivery and culturally responsive teaching, ensuring participants can succeed without compromising their identity.

Since inception, more than 90 Aboriginal firefighters have been employed through IFARES. Recent cohorts continue to demonstrate strong completion and employment outcomes across metropolitan and regional NSW, supported by ongoing mentoring from Aboriginal firefighters.

Beyond employment, the program has strengthened trust with Aboriginal communities, increased aspiration among participants and created visible role models in emergency services. It has also influenced broader practice by demonstrating the effectiveness of culturally informed recruitment and training pathways.



Michael Bolt (He/Him)

Bundjalung and Wiradjuri man – Living on Darkinjung Country

IFARES Graduate



TAFE Travel & Tourism (Cultural Guiding) teacher and students, Gadigal land

Opportunities



TAFE NSW is committed to creating meaningful, sustainable opportunities with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We aim to be the vocational education and training provider of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, alongside our Aboriginal Community Controlled partners, and an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Our commitment is to design and deliver culturally safe, locally informed education and employment pathways that uphold the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and strengthen self-determination. This includes removing barriers to participation, investing in tailored support, and ensuring that our policies, systems, and decision-making processes enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and businesses to thrive.

We recognise that opportunities extend beyond individual outcomes to community and economic outcomes. By partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, and by embedding Aboriginal procurement and employment targets across our operations, we contribute to economic participation, community leadership and intergenerational change.

By recognising, understanding and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and leadership across TAFE NSW, we will continue to build a workforce and learning environment that is inclusive, capable and future-focused – delivering opportunities that benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their communities and the broader NSW economy.

Focus Areas

1. Aboriginal employment, capability, and career development:

TAFE NSW will strengthen workforce participation by implementing tailored professional development, mentoring, and cohort-based leadership pathways, while refining recruitment and Human Resource (HR) practices to remove barriers and enhancing cultural leave to support the unique roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

2. Aboriginal learners, businesses, and economic participation:

TAFE NSW will drive student success and economic growth by co-designing priority learning pathways and culturally safe feedback mechanisms, while implementing a robust procurement strategy that removes barriers for Aboriginal businesses and leverages TAFE NSW resources to support emerging enterprises.

Action	Deliverable	Impact	Timeline	Responsibility
a. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	Increase Aboriginal employment through fair recruitment, career development support, mentoring, and pathways into teaching roles.	A workforce that reflects communities served, with Aboriginal leadership shaping strategy, teaching, student support and governance. Improved retention and leadership pipeline.	December 2027	Chief People Officer
b. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Increase spending with Aboriginal businesses through clear procurement policies, supplier development, and practical support like workspace access.	Stronger Aboriginal business ecosystems and self-determined economic development across NSW. Broader economic and social participation.	June 2027 (ongoing)	Chief Operating Officer
c. Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments, completions, and opportunities.	Improve Aboriginal student enrolment, completion, and success through culturally safe learning environments, better placement quality, and student feedback systems.	Improved educational outcomes and pathways to employment. Reduced discrimination impacts. Stronger lifelong learning and prosperity for Aboriginal students.	December 2027 (ongoing)	Chief Learning & Teaching Officer
d. Promote Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program, to staff and external stakeholders.	Share Reconciliation Australia education resources with TAFE NSW Children's Centres, and help staff and partners implement Narragunnawali program to strengthen pathways.	Stronger reconciliation pathways from early childhood education centres to TAFE and increased awareness of reconciliation in education.	June 2028	Chief Learning & Teaching Officer

Success stories



Kate lives and works on Biripi Country and is a dedicated Adult Literacy and Numeracy Teacher within TAFE NSW. She is a passionate ally who feels honoured to walk alongside First Nations people, supporting students, families, and communities through education.

Kate's journey into this work began through her own family's experience with TAFE NSW, which led her to discover a deep commitment to supporting Aboriginal learners. Since then, she has built strong, trusted relationships across community working with young people, families, and Elders, and connecting learning across both school and TAFE NSW environments.

Kate is committed to empowering Aboriginal students by building confidence, recognising their strengths, and helping them share their knowledge in their own voice. Through programs like Our Words, Our Stories and Short Stories for the Mob, she has worked closely with Elders to support the creation of books that honour and preserve their stories, describing this as a privilege grounded in trust and respect.

As an ally, Kate actively embeds reconciliation into her everyday practice. She encourages listening, learning, and understanding, while acknowledging the limits of her own lived experience. She works to ensure First Nations perspectives are visible in the classroom, promotes cultural awareness, and supports colleagues to better connect with and understand Aboriginal learners.

Kate believes reconciliation allyship starts with truth, respect, and genuine relationships. She is a strong advocate for education as a pathway to understanding and encourages others to learn the true history of Australia and recognise the depth of First Nations knowledge and culture.

Through her work, Kate demonstrates that allyship is not a one-time action, but a continuous commitment to listening, learning, and walking alongside First Nations people to create stronger, more connected communities for all.



Kate Fazio (She/Her)

Ally - Living on Biripi Country

Teacher - Equity, Foundation Skills, Aboriginal Cultures and Languages



TAFE Aboriginal Cultural Arts student,
Gadigal Land (Eora Nation)

Governance



TAFE NSW is committed to strong, transparent, and accountable governance that ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a genuine voice in decisions that affect them. We recognise that reconciliation requires more than good intentions – it depends on clear structures, shared authority, and reliable data so that our commitments translate into measurable change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, communities, and businesses.

Our approach places Aboriginal governance at the centre of our RAP. We will support Aboriginal-led governance groups with clear terms of reference, majority Aboriginal membership, and defined decision making authority, so they can influence priorities, endorse actions and oversee implementation. We will embed RAP responsibilities into our broader Diversity and Inclusion Governance Framework, business plans, performance agreements and reporting cycles, ensuring that reconciliation is part of core organisational accountability, not an add on.

We are committed to building and using robust systems, data and reporting processes to track progress, understand impact and share learning across TAFE NSW. Through regular reporting, visible leadership and open communication, we will celebrate achievements, acknowledge challenges and work together to continuously improve our practice.

Focus Areas

1. Aboriginal-led governance and shared decision-making:

TAFE NSW will empower Aboriginal Governance Groups with majority Aboriginal membership and clear decision-making authority to oversee RAP implementation and influence broader organisational reforms, ensuring that Aboriginal voices are integral to TAFE NSW's strategic direction.

2. Data, transparency, and organisational accountability:

TAFE NSW will maintain robust systems and dashboards to track Aboriginal student and staff metrics and RAP progress, providing regular, transparent reporting to staff and the public to ensure that all levels of leadership are accountable for delivering measurable outcomes and informed by evidence.

Action	Deliverable	Impact	Timeline	Responsibility
a. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Establish Aboriginal-led governance groups with real decision-making power, including majority Aboriginal membership and co-chairs.	Enduring Aboriginal self-determination in TAFE NSW governance, strengthening trust and implementation follow-through.	December 2026 (ongoing)	Managing Director
b. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define and review RAP resourcing, and establish clear data and reporting to track Aboriginal student, staff and program outcomes to support better decision-making.	Resources are aligned to priorities, and decisions are informed by clear, reliable data.	June 2027 (ongoing)	Chief Operating Officer
c. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Review RAP progress, participate in Reconciliation Australia reporting, and use findings to improve actions and inform future planning.	Clear, transparent reporting supports continuous improvement and stronger outcomes over time.	June 2028	Chief People Officer
d. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Assign clear responsibility for each RAP action, track progress publicly through dashboards, and make RAP updates a regular part of leadership meetings.	Reconciliation becomes part of core operational governance and performance, not discretionary activity.	December 2027 (ongoing)	Managing Director
e. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Report RAP progress regularly to staff, leadership, and the public through quarterly updates, annual reports, and success stories.	Sustained trust through visible accountability. Improved ability to scale what works and stop what does not work.	September 2026 (ongoing)	Managing Director

Success stories



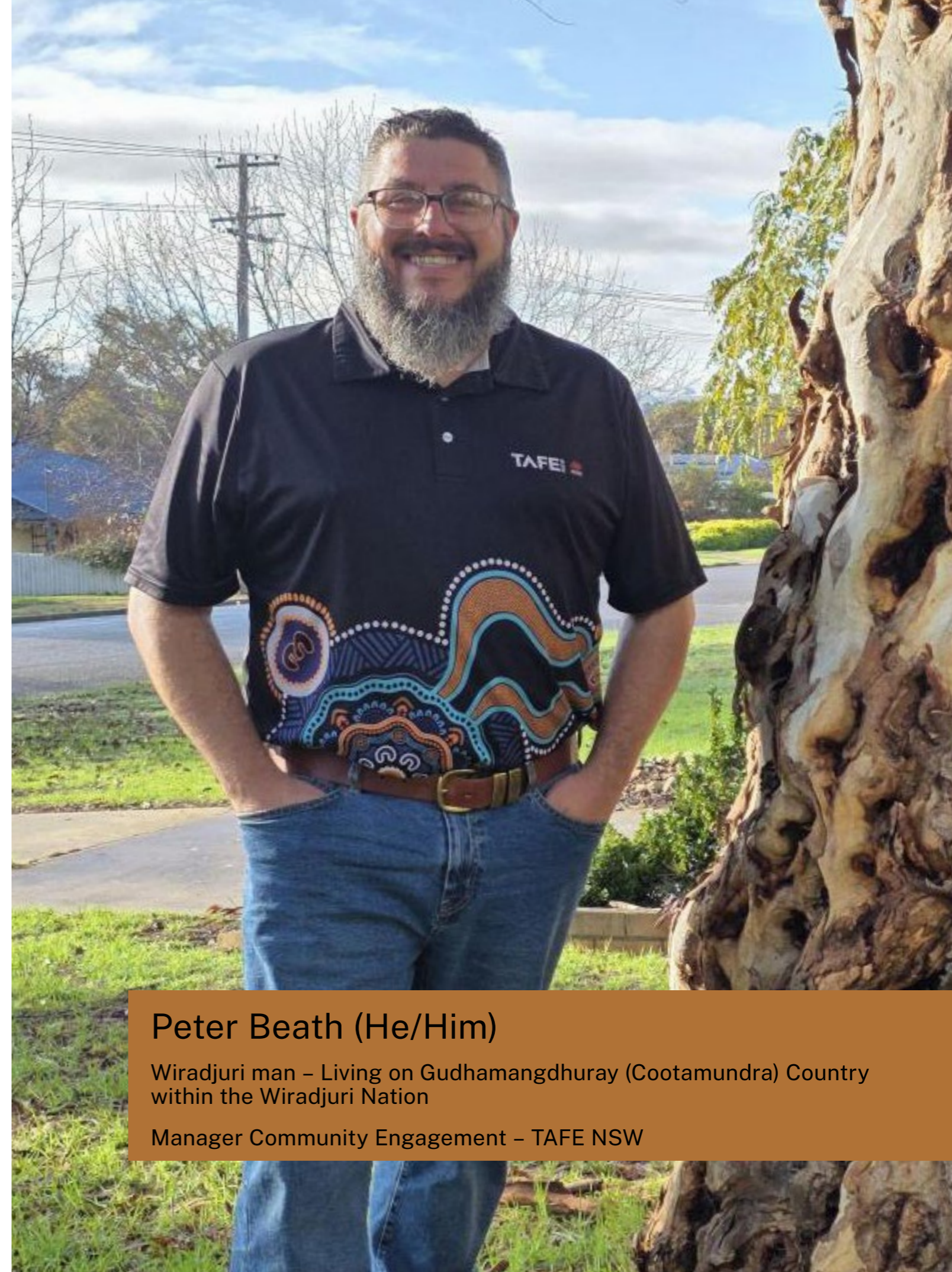
Peter is a proud Wiradjuri man living on Gudhamangdhuray (Cootamundra) Country within the Wiradjuri Nation. As Manager Community Engagement – Southern Inland, he is deeply committed to strengthening connections between TAFE NSW and community, and to creating opportunities for Aboriginal learners.

Peter’s journey with TAFE NSW began at just 15 years old, completing a Statement of Attainment in Aboriginal Vocational Preparation. That early experience sparked a lifelong passion for Indigenous affairs, education and community development. Having experienced TAFE both before and after the introduction of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Peter has seen firsthand the positive impact it has had in shaping a more inclusive and culturally aware workplace.

Through his work, Peter strives to create environments where people feel safe, respected and empowered to succeed. He is passionate about ensuring Aboriginal students feel seen and supported, while also strengthening trust and relationships with community. He recognises the important role TAFE NSW plays in delivering cultural and language programs that contribute to the revitalisation of culture and identity.

Peter believes Reconciliation is essential within education and workplaces, not as a one-off initiative, but as an ongoing commitment to meaningful action. He encourages colleagues to approach Reconciliation with openness, humility and a willingness to listen and learn. For Peter, even small actions; building respectful relationships, challenging assumptions, and supporting inclusive initiatives, can make a lasting difference.

He reminds us that Reconciliation is everyone’s responsibility. By working together, we can build stronger, more inclusive workplaces and better support Aboriginal learners, colleagues and communities, now and into the future.



Peter Beath (He/Him)

Wiradjuri man – Living on Gudhamangdhuray (Cootamundra) Country within the Wiradjuri Nation

Manager Community Engagement – TAFE NSW



Recognition



We acknowledge and thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders, staff, students and partner organisations who contributed their time, knowledge and lived experience to inform this Reconciliation Action Plan.

Your insights have shaped our priorities and approach, and we are committed to continuing to listen, learn and work in partnership as we deliver on our commitments.

The Blue Mountains,
Traditional lands of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples

Contact details

Jarrold Williams

Diversity and Inclusion Specialist

P: (02) 7921 2806

E: reconciliation@tafensw.edu.au

W: tafensw.edu.au/reconciliation