

## Policy Title

### First Peoples Education Policy

#### Preamble

This policy publicly affirms the College's commitment to supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the educational environment of the College.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this First Peoples Education Policy ("Policy") is to publicly affirm the College's commitment to supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the educational environment of the College.

#### Scope

This Policy has been prepared in accordance with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*, the *Navitas Reconciliation Action Plan 2022*. It therefore sets out how the College complies with relevant standards and regulations regarding the support for participation of First Peoples.

The Policy applies to all staff (regardless of their employment status – ongoing, casual, honorary, visiting/guest), and students at the College. It further intends to capture those individuals who contribute to the academic environment of the College, such as contractors, volunteers and members of governing committees.

The Policy is applicable on the College's physical campuses, and in digital College environments.

## Policy

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country

Deakin College acknowledges the people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which the College's campuses are located:

- Melbourne Burwood Campus is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri peoples;
- Geelong Waterfront Campus and Geelong Waurun Ponds Campus are located on the lands of the Wadawurrung peoples.

Deakin College pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The College recognises and respects the continuing living cultures of First Peoples.

### 2. Principles

Deakin College affirms its commitment to the following principles which underpins the approach to First Peoples learning and teaching:

- a. whole-of-College approach across the student life-cycle, from recruitment, admission, participation and progress, graduation and transition to the University;
- b. accountability of all members of the College, senior staff and educators;

- c. recognition and valuing of traditional and contemporary histories, values, languages, culture and knowledge;
- d. respect and civility among and between staff and students;
- e. opportunities for engaging in the governance, decision making, planning, delivery and evaluation of education.

**2.1. Deakin College Strategy to engage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**

- Deakin College outlines its strategies to engage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples (Attachment 1).

**2.2. Engaging with Deakin University**

- Deakin College is privileged to be able to access a range of support services offered by Deakin University. Services available from the University are outlined in Attachment 1.

**3. Compliance**

**3.1. General**

- The College Director & Principal will ensure that staff are informed about this Policy through staff meetings and other internal communications.
- Students will be made aware of this Policy through the College website and through the educational experiences with their Academic Staff.

**3.2. Breaches**

- Academic Staff who breach this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Students who breach this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

**4. Relevant Legislation & Reference Material**

Deakin College maintains compliance with the legislation relating to academic freedom:

Legislation/ Reference Material	Reference
<a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</a>	<p>2.2.2 Diversity and Equity</p> <p><i>“Specific consideration is given to the recruitment, admission, participation and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”</i></p> <p>6.2.1 (g) Corporate Governance</p> <p><i>“The provider is able to demonstrate, and the corporate governing body assures itself, that the provider is operating effectively and sustainably, including:</i></p> <p><i>g. educational policies and practices support participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures.”</i></p>

**Related Policies**

Equity and Diversity Policy  
Student Code of Conduct Policy

Navitas Staff Code of Conduct Policy

**Procedure**

**Definitions**

Key Term or Acronym	Definition
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Person	<p>Source: s51 (25) of the High Court of Australia (1983): <i>“An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live.”</i></p> <p>The use of the abbreviation ‘ATSI’ to describe people is considered offensive and must be avoided.</p>
Aboriginal	<p>Lowercase refers to a First Nations person from any part of the world and does not necessarily refer to an Australian Aboriginal. The College’s preference is that “Aboriginal” should always be capitalised.</p> <p>Generally, not inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people, and therefore, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” should be used when referring collectively.</p> <p>“Aborigine” is offensive and must be avoided. “Aboriginal” must never be abbreviated.</p> <p>“Aboriginal” should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. For example, “Aboriginal students”.</p>
Torres Strait Islander	<p>Refers to a person or a descendant from the Torres Strait Islands to the north of mainland Queensland, Australia. The College’s preference is that “Torres Strait Islander” should always be capitalised.</p> <p>Generally, not inclusive of Aboriginal people, and therefore, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” should be used when referring collectively.</p> <p>“Torres Strait Islander” must never be abbreviated.</p> <p>“Torres Strait Islander” should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. For example, “Torres Strait Islander students”.</p>

First peoples	A collective name for the original people of Australia and their descendants. This is an acceptable term.
Indigenous	While this term is in common use, it was developed without consultation, and some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe the term diminishes their identity and homogenises an array of cultures. In some instances, it may be unavoidable to use the term (e.g. responding to government organisations), and in this case, it should be capitalised as “Indigenous Australians”. The College’s preference is for the use of “First peoples” or “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander”.
Self-identifying terms	Aboriginal people may choose to identify themselves using terms drawn from their languages and specific areas (e.g. Murri, Koori, Noongah, Palawa, Kulkalgal). It is usually not appropriate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use these terms, and best practice is to ask for individual preference about what the person wants to be called.
Elder	The traditional meaning of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder is someone who has gained recognition within their community as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose cultural knowledge and beliefs. Recognised Elders are highly respected people within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
Mob	A term identifying a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people associated with a particular place or country. This is a culturally significant term associated with identity, and it is not appropriate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use this term.
Nation	A culturally distinct group of people associated with a particular culturally defined area of land or country. Each nation has boundaries that cannot be changed, and language is tied to that nation.
Traditional Owner(s)	An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person or group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people directly descended from the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inhabitants of a culturally-defined area of land or country, and has a cultural association with this country that derives from their bloodline back to Country, traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inhabitants of the area.

**Status and Details**

<b>Identification</b>	First Peoples Education Policy
<b>Initial Issue Date</b>	1/06/2023
<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Domain</b>	Wellness, Health and Safety
<b>Effective date</b>	2/06/2023
<b>Review date</b>	2/06/2025
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Senior Management Group
<b>Implementation Officer</b>	College Director and Principal
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Robert Close

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES**

Deakin College is committed to supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the educational environment of the College.

<b>THEME</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PROVIDER</b>
Fees and Scholarships	Each year, one Access Scholarship is offered to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student to undertake a full qualification in any discipline.	College
Admission	<p>The Admissions Policy fundamentally provides for alternate admission pathways, where students have not successfully engaged in secondary study, or have been away from study for a number of years. For example, mature-age entry, work experience, vocational study may all contribute to improving the successful entry of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>The University allocates a number of places in high demand programs (e.g. medicine and allied health) to students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.</p>	<p>College</p> <p>University</p>
Orientation	Local Aboriginal Elders are invited to Orientation Week to conduct a Welcome to Country Smoking Ceremony for Australian and International students.	College
Participation	<p>After enrolment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are contacted by the College's Student Counsellor and connected with the University's First Peoples Student Success Team.</p> <p>This will also expose students to the range of opportunities available at the University, for example galleries and fine arts academics working in the space of Aboriginal Art, units or degrees in First People's</p>	University

THEME	STRATEGY	PROVIDER
	History and Culture, specialised research units focused on First People's issues.	
Participation	A range of events are observed/ celebrated on campus including NAIDOC Week.	College & University
Participation	<p>Raising cultural awareness is embedded through the teaching and learning experience through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscription to Indigenous-run learning platform, which gives academic staff access to content created by First Peoples,</li> <li>• Incorporating First Peoples literature and films into the teaching materials, and embedding themes, story and language into curricular projects,</li> <li>• Including cultural awareness as a Graduate Attribute, and then designating the particular units in which First People modules will be taught/ practiced/ assessed.</li> </ul>	College
Governance	<p>Governing body is supplied with data that demonstrates the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Where there is cause for improvement, strategies are enacted to support.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are considered when nominating students to attend College governing committees.</p> <p>This First Peoples Education Policy affirms the College's commitment to educational policies and practices supporting the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	College & Governing Body
Staff	A range of cultural awareness materials and training webinars are delivered to promote reconciliation and ensure that best practice is followed in terms of recruitment.	College