



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy states EIA's commitment to and principles relating to the acknowledgement of and respect for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and develop and promote their education, employment and social developments in their best interests.

EIA campuses are located on Aboriginal Land and it is important that staff and students understand the significance of observing protocols in recognising the Traditional Owners of the Land.

Observing cultural protocols demonstrates the respect that EIA staff and students have for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people

Aboriginal Country boundaries are not always clearly defined and acknowledging one people over another may unintentionally exclude some people. Specifically acknowledging the people and land of particular Aboriginal communities on which the event is taking place should recognise the people and the country.

The Traditional Owners of the land where Melbourne CBD is located are the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation.

This document aligns with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) HES 2015 in the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 by the Commonwealth of Australia, specifically to Section 2.2.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all EIA staff and students.

It provides guidance to all staff and students on what is appropriate and acceptable in recognising the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Outline the events where Welcomes and Acknowledgements should be included.

Provide guidance on including and paying for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander guests officiating at ceremonies and events.

### 3. Responsibility

The General Manager/Executive Manager of Operations is responsible for maintaining, reviewing and implementing this policy, and may delegate specific roles and responsibilities to other staff as appropriate.

### 4. Definitions

**Aboriginal person:** a person of the Aboriginal race of Australia according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005.

**Torres Strait Islander:** a descendant of an indigenous inhabitant of the Torres Strait Islands according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005.

## 5. Policy

- 5.1 EIA welcomes applications for study or staff positions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It aims to provide a supporting study or work environment and respects the wishes of acknowledgement and recognition of Aboriginal heritage.
- 5.2 EIA adheres to the key principles below with the aim of driving a deep understanding of and enhancing cultural exchange and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:
  - 5.2.1 Fostering a welcoming, inclusive and respectful learning environment for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
  - 5.2.2 Acknowledging the ownership of land and the connection to their Country by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
  - 5.2.3 Monitoring and responding to the needs and feedback of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 5.3 Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of People and Country is a statement of recognition of the traditional owners of the land. An Acknowledgement of Country can be given by any person. A standard Acknowledgement of Country for Melbourne CBD is:

*“I’d like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation and pay my respects to Elders past and present.”*

OR

A generic Acknowledgement of Country is:

*“I wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we gather here today and pay respect to their Elders past and present.”*

In recognition of the traditional owners of the land on which EIA offers its courses, EIA will display the generic ‘Acknowledgement to Country’ statement on the wall of every classroom.

### 5.4 Welcome to Country

- 5.4.1 A Welcome to Country can only be performed by a traditional custodian from that particular Country where the event is being held. This is usually a recognised Elder from the local community. The Elder welcomes people to their land. A Welcome to Country usually consists of a speech and may also include traditional language, singing, dancing or Didgeridoo playing. The types of event where a Welcome to Country might be performed by an Aboriginal Elder from the local community would be:
  - Opening a new building;
  - Awards Events, including graduation;
  - Community Engagement events.
- 5.4.2 If a Welcome to Country at such an event is not possible, an Acknowledgement of Country is the minimum requirement.

### 5.5 Sensitivity to Aboriginal Cultural Protocols

5.5.1 Some cultural ceremonies and protocols are sensitive and may not be discussed or shared with the broader community. For example, taking photographs or filming needs to be confirmed before a ceremony takes place due to Aboriginal culture and beliefs.

5.5.2 It is important that the nature of the event and the expected proceedings are discussed with the Aboriginal community representative prior to the event taking place.

#### 5.6 Intellectual Property and Fees for Service

EIA will recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are using their intellectual property when providing cultural services, such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies. The remuneration for their services is to be discussed and arranged prior to the event.

## 6 Procedure

6.1 This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the EIA Access and Equity Policy.

6.2 Feedback will be collected from the subgroup of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and analyses will inform reviews conducted by the following groups:

- Student Progress Committee;
- Unit Advisory and Students Results Approval Group;
- Student Experience Group;
- Unit Experience Group;
- Student Representatives Update

6.3 When appropriate, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Group will be set up to specifically monitor the progress and needs of this student group.

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