

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS

Successful implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures content in all K–12 syllabuses is underpinned by a sound understanding of the key principles and protocols listed below.

For delivery of specialised Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal Languages syllabuses, and for any other units of work with a particular or sustained focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, NSW schools will ensure successful and sustainable learning outcomes by working in partnership with their local Aboriginal community(ies).

Principles of cultural safety are founded on respectful behaviours and integrity. Some consistent principles associated with the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures include:

- respect for and protection of the knowledge and cultural expressions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to self-determination
- ongoing consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders and keepers, custodians and stakeholders
- reciprocity between education providers and communities
- commitment to long-term improvement and partnership
- engagement with stakeholders focusing on cultural safety
- recognition of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property.

In NSW protocols may differ between local Aboriginal communities but they could share some commonalities. The following are some commonly observed broad protocols within Aboriginal communities:

- respect for Elders in decision-making processes
- respect for the roles of men and the roles of women
- collective custodianship by traditional owners and keepers of Country and cultural knowledge
- arrival at decisions by consensus
- awareness of on-Country and off-Country obligations
- the right to observe cultural responsibilities and obligations, eg to care for Country and to pass on cultural knowledge.

To develop further knowledge about principles and protocols school representatives can contact their local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), Aboriginal education consultants within education systems, local Aboriginal land councils or language centres. This approach accords with the guide, [*Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols*](#) (2008).