

TOGETHER
WE ARE
TOGETHER
WE CAN
TOGETHER
WE WILL

‘Maintaining a collaborative partnership into the future’

**PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENT
2010 - 2020**

OUR COMMITMENT

The Partnership Agreement is a statement of intent of how the NSW AECG and the Department of Education and Training are planning on working together.

The strength of the NSW AECG is its community base through its network of local and regional AECGs. This allows Aboriginal people to have a voice in self determining their educational future which will impact on the future prosperity of Aboriginal communities.

This strength of the NSW AECG is pivotal to the government as it allows policies and programs to be developed that meet the needs of Aboriginal people and their communities. The working together of Aboriginal communities and the Department of Education and Training is strengthened, under this Partnership Agreement, to achieve common goals set in consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal communities.

This Partnership Agreement recognises the critical need to work together, across schools and TAFE colleges, to achieve the aspirations and potential of Aboriginal learners.

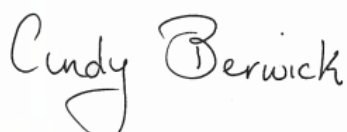
The Partnership Agreement is also critically important in fostering collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in promoting a better understanding of our shared history, respect and acceptance of both cultures and recognition of the unique place Aboriginal people have in this country.

The Partnership Agreement has meaning and it has purpose.

It means accountability to the community as we continue to demand our right to an education and training system that acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as belonging to the oldest living culture of humanity as well as the First peoples of this land.

We have laid the foundation; a stepping stone on which to continue to build.

The NSW AECG will unequivocally commit to working with the Department of Education and Training on the agreed priorities and supporting the translation of those priorities' into practice at the regional and local levels.



Cindy Berwick
President
NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated

For too long there has been a gap in opportunity and in achievement between Aboriginal people and their fellow Australians.

To turn this around requires the involvement of Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal parents and carers, grandparents, families, students, their teachers, school staff, TAFE staff and every single person that works in education and training.

This Partnership Agreement reflects a relationship between the Department of Education and Training and the NSW AECG that exists to provide Aboriginal students with the chance to enjoy more choices, more freedom, better health and greater opportunities.

Both organisations are making clear and specific commitments to one another about what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. We will need to work through the challenges that will inevitably arise.

Our partnership is not new. This Agreement is built on a very close relationship that the department already enjoys with the NSW AECG. Through this agreement we now have clear expectations about building relationships with Aboriginal students, Aboriginal families and communities and the people of the NSW AECG.

All good relationships are built on honesty and openness. This can be confronting, but as we proceed together our actions will develop trust.

We must genuinely consult and collaborate with local Aboriginal communities to ensure that the work we are doing in our schools and TAFE Institutes is responding to the education and training needs of Aboriginal people.

We must have high expectations for our Aboriginal students, for ourselves and for the community.

We mustn't allow ourselves any excuses for lack of success for Aboriginal students at school and TAFE.



Michael Coutts-Trotter
Director-General of Education and Training
Managing Director of TAFE NSW



INTRODUCTION

The Partnership Agreement between the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG) is based on the principles of **respect, commitment, collaboration** and **accountability** in order to improve educational and training outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

The first Partnership Agreement was signed in 1999 to ensure that Aboriginal people had a voice in setting the directions and goals for education and training in NSW.

This renewed Partnership Agreement builds on the joint work undertaken by the Department (which comprises Regions, schools, TAFE NSW Institutes, Adult and Community Education Colleges, and state offices) and the NSW AECG (at a local, regional and state level) to ensure Aboriginal parents and communities are actively engaged in public education and training in NSW.

The Partnership Agreement is based on a genuine and practical approach to working together to improve outcomes for Aboriginal learners by ensuring that they have access to an education and training system that values their cultural heritage and identity and supports their learning and career development through quality teaching practices, relevant policies and strategies and inclusive curriculum and training programs.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement of the Partnership Agreement has three key messages:

Together We Are committed to providing Aboriginal people with opportunities to be actively involved through collaborative processes and we will listen and respond to the academic and vocational needs of Aboriginal students with rigour, accountability and cultural respect....

Together We Can ensure that we value and respect the viewpoints and contribution of Aboriginal families and communities as we strive for equity and excellence by working together to improve education and training outcomes for Aboriginal students....

Together We Will succeed in providing learning environments that contribute to Aboriginal students becoming more confident, more creative and more able to excel so that they lead satisfying, productive and responsible lives that enable their contribution to the prosperity and well-being of their families and communities....



AGREED PRIORITIES

- Providing opportunities to enable active engagement and participation of Aboriginal parents and communities in all aspects of education and training in schools, TAFE NSW Institutes and Adult and Community Education Colleges.
- Ensuring that Aboriginal students have access to quality learning and training environments that enhance their capacity to live fulfilling and productive lives that contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of their communities.
- Supporting parents and/or carers and families, within the context of improving education and training outcomes for students, to build their capacity to actively engage in the formal education and training of their children and young people.
- Ensuring that Aboriginal children have skills for learning by the time they start school by providing access to a variety of relevant and culturally inclusive prior to school and preschool programs.
- Targeting efforts to ensure that Aboriginal students develop appropriate reading, literacy and numeracy skills that reflect parity with their non-Aboriginal peers throughout the successive stages of learning.
- Continuously increasing Year 12 completion rates and the rates of attainment for equivalent Vocational Education and Training qualifications.
- Ensuring that all Aboriginal students have access to a range of educational learning options that include self-directed distance education and training and/or on-line delivery learning.
- Engaging students in learning for longer by ensuring that more Aboriginal people are participating in and completing Vocational Education and Training courses at higher qualifications levels and are supported to achieve these qualifications.
- Ensuring that the education and training workforce has the capacity to respond effectively to the holistic education and training needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students and communities.
- Providing opportunities for feedback, assessment and review of implementation of the Partnership Agreement across the public education and training system will be achieved through formal and informal reporting processes.
- The Director-General and/or the NSW AECG President have a mandate to request an overall review of the progress of the Partnership Agreement on advice from stakeholders.



FOCUS AREAS

In the spirit of partnership, the NSW AECG and the Department of Education and Training, within their own cultural contexts and practices, jointly commit to respecting, valuing and supporting each other to assist Aboriginal students achieve successful education and training outcomes through four key focus areas.

These focus areas are:

1. **Leadership, planning and accountability** involve developing leaders who will work with Aboriginal people to inspire and motivate them to achieve their full potential. Ensuring that the Department and the AECG are collaboratively planning at all levels to develop inclusive policies, strategies and initiatives.

Having clear and legitimate reporting and monitoring processes in place to ensure everyone is accountable for their contribution to Aboriginal education and training outcomes.

2. **Ongoing learning and professional development** focus on supporting the notion that, in the context of ongoing learning and professional development, people will gain a greater understanding and be better informed of the role and function of both organisations. This will underpin the successful implementation of the Partnership Agreement.
3. **Relationships and pathways** focus on building and maintaining respectful and effective working relationships that value the input of all and provides opportunities for people to engage and contribute towards achieving the common goal of striving for successful outcomes for Aboriginal students.
4. **Teaching and training** is about quality teaching and education and training experiences are meaningful and relevant. It is about engaging in learning environments where teachers and students have high expectations of each other with the two-pronged outcome of achieving academically and having experiences that encourages the desire for ongoing learning.

Focus Area 1: Leadership and Accountability

- Acceptance and validation of the primary role of the NSW AECG as the peak advisory body to the Department of Education and Training, which through advocacy and by working with all levels of the NSW AECG prioritises development of policies, plans and strategies which best address the education and training needs of Aboriginal students.
- Monitoring of the Partnership Agreement as a standing agenda item on key committees of both partners, such as the Director-General's Aboriginal Education and Training Reference Group, the NSW AECG Management Committee and Regional Aboriginal Education Committees.
- Investing in the development of effective leadership through professional development opportunities and initiatives to contribute



to individual growth and organisational improvement in order to achieve the shared vision of the Partnership Agreement.

- Providing opportunities for Aboriginal families and communities to have input into decision making through authentic consultation processes.
- Jointly engaging in collaborative processes of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the education and training outcomes achieved - acknowledging each other's advice on how to improve efforts and progress actions.

Focus Area 2: Ongoing learning and Professional Development

- Acknowledging the resources and assets that each brings to the partnership and the critical importance of having government and Aboriginal communities working together to achieve systemic and sustainable change through the development of policies, strategies and initiatives that will improve education and training outcomes for Aboriginal students and learners.
- Providing ongoing learning and professional development opportunities relating to the function and roles of the NSW AECG and the Department of Education and Training, with the view to building the capacity of all stakeholders who have a significant impact on education and training outcomes for Aboriginal students.
- Educating all students and staff about reconciliation and social justice through raising their awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures and experiences through programs that are academically rigorous and inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives.
- Improving the capacity of the Department's workforce to respond more effectively to the education and training needs of Aboriginal learners.

Focus Area 3: Relationships and Pathways

- Building the capacity of Aboriginal parents, families and community members to actively engage and participate in education and training processes.
- Working collaboratively through effective leadership, innovative practices and inclusive curriculum and training programs towards achieving the goal *'that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population'*.
- Provide opportunities for parent and community engagement to ensure that the skills, knowledge and experiences of parents and community members are incorporated into the development, implementation and evaluation of education and training policies, programs and strategies.

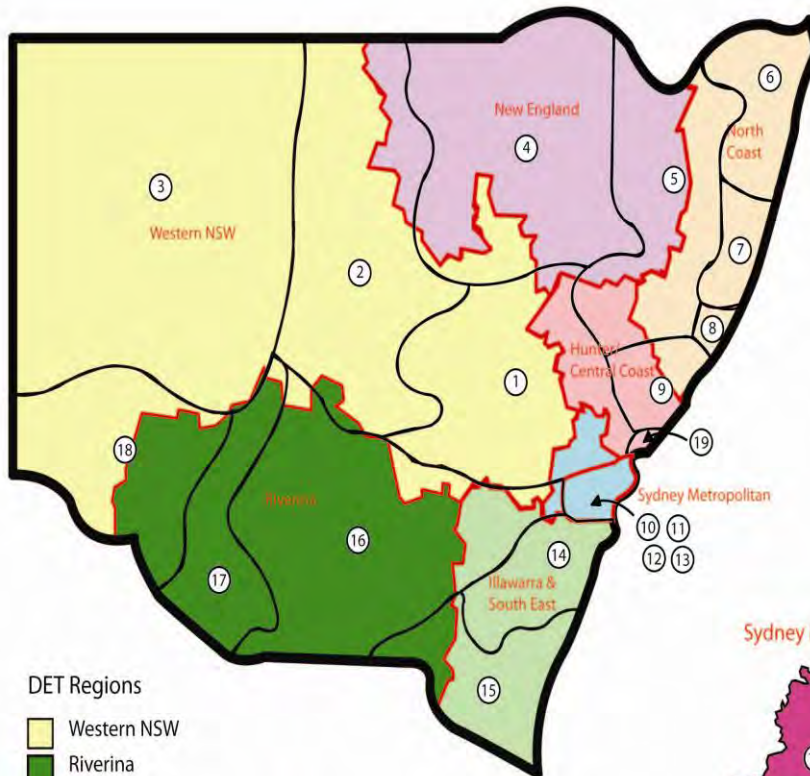


- Increasing community engagement, particularly of Aboriginal parents, in schools and TAFE NSW Institutes in all aspects of public education and training, including in decision-making processes.
- Embedding the principles of cultural respect, with the view to achieving a culturally competent workforce which advocates that Aboriginal education is the responsibility of all. Cultural respect is achieved when systems and processes are in place that will not compromise the cultural rights, practices and values of Aboriginal people.

Focus Area 4: Quality Teaching and Training

- Working together as equal partners, through genuine consultation with Aboriginal communities to ensure that quality teaching and learning is realised.
- Supporting quality teaching through culturally inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and practices that are intellectually demanding, futures oriented and that value Aboriginal students' cultural identities and heritage.
- Ensuring a holistic approach to learning that is student-centred and focused on improving educational and social outcomes for Aboriginal learners.
- Promoting the educational achievements of Aboriginal students in pre-schools, schools, TAFE NSW Institutes and Adult and Community Education Colleges.
- Engaging in cooperative planning and collaborative development and implementation of contributions to the design and delivery of curriculum and training programs and initiatives in schools and vocational education training settings.

NSW AECG and Department of Education and Training Regions



DET Regions



AECG Regions

- Region 1 - Western 1
- Region 2 - Western 2
- Region 3 - Western 3
- Region 4 - North West 1
- Region 5 - North West 2
- Region 6 - Upper North Coast
- Region 7 - Lower North Coast
- Region 8 - Manning
- Region 9 - Hunter
- Region 10 - Met. East
- Region 11 - Met. North
- Region 12 - Met. West
- Region 13 - Met. South West
- Region 14 - Upper South Coast
- Region 15 - Lower South Coast
- Region 16 - Riverina 1
- Region 17 - Riverina 2
- Region 18 - Riverina 3
- Region 19 - Central Coast

Sydney Metropolitan



CONTACTS

NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc

37 Cavendish Street
 STANMORE NSW 2048
 Tel: 02 9550 5666
 Fax: 02 9550 3361
 Website: www.aecg.nsw.edu.au

NSW Department of Education and Training

35 Bridge Street
 SYDNEY NSW 2000
 Tel: 02 9561 8000
 Website: www.det.nsw.edu.au

Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate

Level 14, 1 Oxford Street
 DARLINGHURST NSW 2010
 Tel: 02 9244 5640
 Fax: 02 9244 5365

Artwork: Bronwyn Bancroft