

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies would like to acknowledge both the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we are located in Melbourne. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal language groups across all of Victoria, whose lands we provide funding for specific projects around Early Childhood Education. We acknowledge their history, their people, and their stories. As an Association we will work together for reconciliation, a process that starts with the acknowledgement of true Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of Australia, and will always value the contribution to our community and culture, the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, communities and their stories.

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agencies and Services Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Establishing a strong and safe working relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies for and services implementing Reconciliation activities.

2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on committees

“As part of the oldest continuous cultures in the world, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities hold rich knowledge and diverse experiences of knowing, being and doing that have thrived and adapted over millennia. It is important to foster a deep understanding of this in your learning community. Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in committees will enhance your strategies and decisions, especially at the local level.”
- *Narragunnawali Reconciliation in education*

3. Promoting the benefits of supplier diversity

Highlight benefits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, quality, country, respect and acknowledgement of the skills required. The following information from Narragunnawali, read AGECS Council instead of staff.

4. Opportunities for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses

“Staff understand the social and economic benefits of supplier diversity and how it contributes to economic empowerment, business growth and increased employment. Staff learn about the range of products and services available from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses. Staff identify opportunities for engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses at your school or early learning service.” *Narragunnawali Reconciliation in education*

5. Establishing relationships

Respect, consultation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in planning and funding. Authenticity of all activities and events produced by AGECS must have consultation and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or organisations.

6. Related documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following AGECS policies:

- Code of Conduct (incorporating the Working together agreement and Virtual meeting guidelines)
- Complaints Handling policy
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Contractor and ambassador policy
- Social Media policy

7. Procedure

- Approach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who attend AGECS events by email. Acknowledge their attendance and ask if they are interested in being invited to be a member of AGECS Council.
- All planning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities and events must include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.
- Facilitating grant writing; supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood agencies and services that have Charitable/Not-for-Profit status to apply for funds as requested. For example, Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) will apply through Warrawong and Forest Hill grants to organise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and projects.
- Do not talk on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and services. Always ask for their guidance and acknowledge their experience culture and protocols.
- Write a formal thank you letter to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and agencies in AGECS activities and events.
- Refer to links and services as recommended by Aboriginal Ambassadors and listed in the Reconciliation section of the AGECS website.
- RAP committee members and AGECS Council members attend showcasing and network events of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, businesses and services.
- AGECS Council to understand the importance of supplier diversity and to include activities and events that can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses.
- Budget and management of finances
 - a) An annual budget (amount to be determined annually by Finance Committee and endorsed by Council) will be allocated to the AGECS RAP Committee. This budget will include the costs of producing the AGECS RAP (e.g. professional artwork, design, layout, printing if required), sitting members fees and other activities that will be part of meeting the RAP requirements.
 - b) The RAP budget and expenditure report will be presented at each RAP committee meeting.

- c) For every engagement, task and activity requested by the RAPWG from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agency or service. This includes the Aboriginal Consultant:
 - i) an itemised quote is required.
 - ii) This quote will be presented to the RAPWG.
 - iii) Then taken to the next AGECS Council meeting for approval unless the RAPWG are authorised to approve the quote.
 - iv) Written agreement (usually email) to commence with the activity must be forwarded to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business, agency or service.

Note: When an agreement is required sooner than the next RAP meeting an email requiring agreement from a majority of RAP committee members is required (and council members if council approval is required)
- d) A modest sitting fee is payable to Aboriginal representatives for attendance of the RAP committee meetings and workshops, as well as recognition for preparation time and travel costs for attending any face-to-face meetings. It is important to take into account the multiple responsibilities of Aboriginal people. This fee is agreed upon by the RAPWG and reviewed each RAP.

For questions about this policy, contact the Chair of AGECS’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee, nominated Aboriginal Representative or Reconciliation Liaison Officer.

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Responsible person	The President	Scheduled review date	December 2026