AFTRS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy

CONTENTS

1 Statement of Acknowledgement

1.1 AFTRS acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation where the AFTRS campus is located, and all Traditional Owners across the lands of Australia, past, present and future.

2 Purpose

2.1 AFTRS is the national screen and broadcast education, research and training institution. AFTRS has a leadership role in supporting and building Australia's screen and broadcast sector and achieves this by fostering excellence and innovation in industry-focused education, training and research

2.2 AFTRS has a long history of supporting Indigenous storytellers across the craft areas of film and broadcast, many of whom have gained national and international acclaim for their creative work.

2.3 The development of a School-wide policy builds on this tradition and embeds the responsibility to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage into the fabric of the School's life. The policy ensures that all AFTRS' learning, teaching and cultural activities reflect Australian culture, inclusive of the First Nations peoples.

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3 Policy Statement

3.1   AFTRS articulates its commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and storytelling as integral to Australian culture and identity, and undertakes to reflect this commitment across all its activities by working to fulfil the objectives as stated in section 7.

3.2   AFTRS is a cultural agency and an educational institution that equips students for careers in the screen and broadcast industries, and provides advanced training to emerging and industry practitioners. AFTRS has a responsibility to create a 'culturally competent' industry, increase the participation of Indigenous people as skilled practitioners and champion the development of talented Indigenous storytellers across the screen and broadcast industries.

4 Scope

4.1   This policy applies to AFTRS employees and students.

5 Definitions

5.1   **Indigenous**

5.1.1   With the exception of reference to international indigenous peoples, the term 'Indigenous' is used to refer to the Indigenous people of Australia, who are otherwise known as 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander' people.

5.1.2   For the purposes of this policy 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander' is the preferred term for the First Nations Peoples of Australia. References to specific language groups, nations, clans and kinship affiliations may be relevant depending on the context. For example, in the School's Acknowledgement of Country, the reference is "…*the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation".*

5.2   **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

5.2.1   For the purposes of this document, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is anyone who is:[1]
   - of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
   - identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and
   - is recognised by the Indigenous community in which they live as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

5.3   **Indigenous Work vs Indigenous Content**

5.3.1   As a descriptive term, 'Indigenous' is used by AFTRS in two distinct ways:

5.3.1.1 *Indigenous work* to refer to film, broadcast or digital work authored by Indigenous practitioners;

5.3.1.2 *Indigenous content* to refer to stories, subjects or material featuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture or heritage in any form

5.3.2   A film may therefore involve *Indigenous content* but not be an *Indigenous work.*

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[1] Based on the definition adopted by the Commonwealth of Australia for administrative purposes.

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5.4   **Indigenous Cultural Competency**

5.4.1   The *National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities* describes Indigenous cultural competency as:[2]

"Indigenous cultural competence requires an organisational culture that is committed to social justice, human rights and the process of reconciliation through valuing and supporting Indigenous cultures, knowledges and peoples as integral to the core business of the institution. "It requires effective inclusive policies and procedures, monitoring mechanisms and allocation of sufficient resources to foster culturally competent behaviour and practice at all levels of the institution.
"Embedding Indigenous cultural competence requires commitment to a whole of institution approach, including increasing the University's engagement with Indigenous communities, Indigenisation of the curriculum, proactive provision of services and support to Indigenous students, capacity building of Indigenous staff, professional development of non-Indigenous staff and the inclusion of Indigenous cultures and knowledges as a visual and valued aspect of University life, governance and decision-making."

6   Principles

6.1   **Respect**

6.1.1   AFTRS acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people as the original Australians and ongoing custodians of country, and respects the unique place they occupy within Australian society and subsequently within AFTRS. This extends to:
- respect for Indigenous cultures and heritage, including the recognition of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, maintenance of cultural integrity and respect for cultural beliefs; and
- respect for Indigenous individuals and communities. [3]

6.1.2   AFTRS also commits to formally acknowledging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders as Australia's First Peoples, when appropriate, at AFTRS events.

6.2   **Shared Responsibility and Policy Development**

6.2.1   Implementation of this policy is a responsibility shared across the School. Moving forward, each Division and Unit will have the responsibility to develop approaches that arise from this policy as relevant to their area of work or activity, e.g. Indigenous staff induction.

6.2.2   AFTRS will consider this policy in the preparation and review of major School initiatives, programs and strategies.

6.3   **Cultural Safety**

6.3.1   AFTRS is committed to an environment that is welcoming, respectful, culturally-safe, non-discriminatory and free of harassment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

6.4   **Cultural Competency**

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[2] *National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities*, Universities Australia, October 2011.

[3] *Pathways & Protocols: A filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts, Screen Australia*, 2008.

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6.4.1   AFTRS is committed to an environment that is welcoming, respectful, culturally-safe, non-discriminatory and free of harassment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.[4]

6.5   **Equitable Employment**

6.5.1   AFTRS is committed to the achievement of equitable targets and outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. The School will ensure that Indigenous employment objectives are specifically included in all major AFTRS strategies and plans.

7   Objectives

In working to fulfil its commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures under this policy, AFTRS states the following objectives:
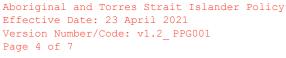
7.1   **To increase the Indigenous cultural competence of AFTRS, its staff and students, so that they better understand and appreciate Indigenous culture and heritage, and the impact of these on their work, including:**
- taking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural considerations into account in all AFTRS policies and practices, e.g. staff induction;
- embedding relevant education about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, practices and protocols in teaching across the School;
- continuing the School's engagement with Indigenous communities;
- proactively providing services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait students;
- building capacity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff;
- encouraging and supporting the increased employment of Indigenous staff across the School;

7.2   **To develop and champion Indigenous storytelling and representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in screen and broadcast media, including:**
- encouraging the use of material by or about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching modules;
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in telling their own stories;
- cultivating and disseminating knowledge and understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytelling in the screen and broadcast industries;
- actively engaging Indigenous people as teachers, speakers, workshop leaders and guest lecturers where appropriate.

7.3   **To increase the participation of Indigenous people as skilled practitioners in the screen and broadcast industries, including:**
- making AFTRS more accessible for Indigenous students at all levels
- raising the profile of AFTRS as a pathway for talented Indigenous students seeking screen and broadcast education
- linking Indigenous students and participants with industry, and supporting them to build professional networks to achieve professional outcomes.

8   Roles and Responsibilities

8.1   **The CEO of AFTRS**

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[4] Adapted from National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities, Universities Australia, October 2011.

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8.1.1 The CEO is responsible for the implementation of this policy, and is also responsible for including performance expectations in the work-plans of Executives to ensure that these policy objectives are achieved across the School.

8.2 Executives and Heads of Departments

8.2.1 Executives and Heads of Departments are responsible for the implementation of this policy within their Division, and for including relevant performance indicators in the work-plans of their staff to ensure these policy objectives are achieved across the School.

8.3 The Indigenous Unit

8.3.1 In January 2016, the Indigenous Unit was formed to provide a focus within the School and the broader industry to nurture and support Indigenous students, emerging talent and existing practitioners. The Unit connects relevant community representatives and industry bodies with Indigenous course participants to address specific skill gaps in the industry. The Unit implements programs of professional development across film, television and radio practice, and works on strategic engagement with a diverse range of Indigenous communities to develop and implement training.

8.3.2 The Indigenous Unit also provides support to the CEO and Executive through advice and consultation, and encourages working collaboratively across the School to achieve these policy objectives.

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9 Related Policy Statements and Documents

9.1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

9.1.1 The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, is a set of principles describing equality, non-discrimination, partnership, consultation and cooperation between Indigenous peoples and governments and their institutions. The Australian Government officially endorsed this document on 3 April 2009. Article 16 references the rights of Indigenous people to establish their own media and have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination.
https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1

9.2 Industry Protocols

9.2.1 Terri Janke, *Pathways & Protocols: A filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts*, Screen Australia, 2008.
This guide provides practical and transparent principles and protocols that facilitate respectful filmmaking involving Indigenous cultural heritage in Australian film and television production. Referenced by State and Federal film funding agencies as the foundation for best practice when screen projects involve Indigenous content or communities, the guide's framework and principles also apply to broadcast projects more generally.
http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/16e5ade3-bbca-4db2-a433-94bcd4c45434/Pathways-and-Protocols

9.3 University Frameworks

9.3.1 Executives *National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities*, Universities Australia, October 2011
Australian universities are currently implementing the key guiding principles established by the Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities Best Practice Framework. This Framework was created through a project undertaken by Universities Australia and the Higher Education Advisory Council with funding provided by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/diversity-equity/indigenous-higher-education/indigenous-cultural-competency-framework/

10 Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	CEO — 23 April 2021
Responsible Officer	Director, First Nations & Outreach
Contact Officer	Policy & Governance Officer
Distribution	Intranet and AFTRS Website Staff, Student and Public facing
Next Review Date	April 2024

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Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	CEO 3 March 2017
Amendment History and Date	N/A
Notes	N/A
Minor Amendment Approval and History	19 April 2021 administrative amendment: update of role titles aligned to restructure.

AFTRS acknowledges its reference to the University of Melbourne's Guidelines for Drafting Policy and Procedure (June 2013) in developing this templ

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