

# CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

## FACT SHEET

### FOR TEACHING ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

#### What are cultural protocols?

Cultural protocols are culturally informed criteria that signpost a code of practice for teaching Aboriginal languages and cultures in schools and TAFE Institutes.

#### Why is a code of practice necessary?

A culturally informed code of practice will guide schools and TAFE Institutes to work productively with Aboriginal communities to circumvent cultural problems that may arise when schools and TAFE Institutes unknowingly:

- engage unendorsed language and culture teachers
- allow teaching of unendorsed cultural content
- allow teaching of restricted cultural content
- allow inappropriate teaching of gender specific cultural content

#### What cultural protocols signpost a code of practice for teaching Aboriginal languages and cultures?

There are three key cultural protocols to be observed when teaching Aboriginal languages and cultures in schools and TAFE Institutes:

##### Protocol 1 –

##### An Aboriginal community endorses a teacher of Aboriginal languages and cultures

- a teacher of Aboriginal language and culture is typically an Aboriginal community person who is known and respected within an Aboriginal community as:
  - a significant cultural knowledge holder
  - a skilled speaker of a community's language
  - a skilled practitioner of a community's culture
- a non-Aboriginal person may also be considered a valid teacher of Aboriginal language and culture when an Aboriginal community has endorsed them as credentialed to teach a community's language and culture

##### Protocol 2 –

##### An Aboriginal community ratifies Aboriginal language and culture knowledge

- an Aboriginal language is accepted as accurate when it projects words, meanings, syntax and phonics uncontestedly recognised and acknowledged by an Aboriginal community
- Aboriginal culture knowledge is accepted as accurate when it projects conceptualisations, philosophies, values and practices uncontestedly recognised and accepted by an Aboriginal community

##### Protocol 3 –

##### An Aboriginal community expects that cultural knowledge conventions will be respected

- Aboriginal knowledge is safeguarded through the application of spiritually founded conventions that govern public disclosure and dissemination of restricted language and culture knowledge
- Aboriginal knowledge is fixed within spiritually founded designations that further govern accessibility of non-restricted language and culture knowledge, which is either community centred or gender specific

#### How can schools and TAFE Institutes implement this code of practice?

Schools and TAFE Institutes can implement this code of practice by forming partnerships with local Aboriginal community's that encourage:

- dual decision making on all matters related to teaching Aboriginal language and culture
- community sanction of Aboriginal language and culture teachers before offers of appointment
- community sanction of language and culture knowledge content prior to teaching

#### What will occur if this code of practice is not implemented?

Schools and TAFE Institutes who engage unendorsed cultural teachers, countenance unendorsed and/or restricted cultural knowledge within their programing or permit inappropriate delivery of gender specific knowledge content are likely to distance Aboriginal communities, negate Aboriginal community trust in schools and TAFE Institutes, and discourage Aboriginal community collaboration.

*"Teachers will be endorsed by the local community and will be either a local Aboriginal language speaker (supervised by a qualified teacher) or a qualified Aboriginal language teacher"*

*OCHRE: NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal Affairs: Education, Employment and Accountability, 2013, p.21*

