

# ABORIGINAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

Impact report

October 2025



Government  
of South Australia

Department for Education

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners throughout South Australia, and we pay respect to the custodians of the lands on which the initiatives to advance the goals of the Aboriginal Education Strategy are being delivered.

We respect their spiritual relationship with Country and acknowledge that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to those living today.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and we acknowledge the cultural authority of Aboriginal people of South Australia and across Australia.

## Dedication to children and their families

The Aboriginal Education Strategy is dedicated to the children and young people in our communities, all of whom deserve access to high-quality early childhood and school education, and pathways. Aboriginal children and young people have a right to be raised strong in spirit and identity and connected to culture in education and care environments that provide every opportunity for lifelong learning and wellbeing, reflective of Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing, becoming, belonging and being.

## Key achievements April to September 2025

- 26% increase in Aboriginal staff on the Voice Register
- 500% increase in staff completing culturally responsive training
- 45% of all enrolled Aboriginal learners supported through local networks
- Launched the Kurna language scope and sequence - the first of its kind in Australia
- More pathways for Aboriginal students to achieve their SACE



## Our Goals



Aboriginal children develop foundations for success in the early years



Aboriginal children and young people excel at school



Aboriginal young people are on pathways to success



## Our Enablers



### Aboriginal Voice Framework

Aboriginal knowledge, perspectives and expertise inform policy and projects system-wide.



### Aboriginal Funding Model

Funding arrangements for schools for Aboriginal children and young people are predictable and flexible, supporting improved learning outcomes.



### Aboriginal Workforce Plan

An improved level of cultural awareness, understanding and respect across our workforce and within our workplaces; Aboriginal employees feel supported to build their careers and to seek leadership opportunities.



### Expert Advisory Panel

Consultation was undertaken during early 2024 by Lowitja Institute to inform approaches to strengthening Aboriginal governance and oversight of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation.

In partnership with Aboriginal people, the department is undertaking work to reset our approach to improving Aboriginal outcomes. Work is currently underway to create a strategic direction that will provide a clear vision and guide for our collective responsibility to support Aboriginal children and young people to achieve their highest potential within and beyond our system.

# Aboriginal Voice Framework

Consistent with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the department's Stretch Reconciliation Plan, a key principle of the Aboriginal Education Strategy is community engagement: we will hear, seek and respect the voices of Aboriginal people and organisations, and encourage the participation of Aboriginal students, carers, families and communities across our services.

Aboriginal community-controlled organisations continue to be engaged or supported by the department to co-design, inform and/or deliver initiatives in tranche 2 of the Strategy.

The Aboriginal Voice Framework is being embedded, with:

- **26% increase in Aboriginal employees registered.** We now have 124 Aboriginal employees from across corporate and sites, regional and metro registered, representing 12.8% of the total Aboriginal workforce.
- A total of 229 employees having completed the Aboriginal Voice training.

"I believe the training program gave me some strategies to effectively engage in Policies and a better understanding of the Aboriginal Voice Framework"

Aboriginal Voice training registrant

"The training exceeded my expectations. Not only was the session deeply informative, the personal narrative to connect the learning were powerful"

Policy Project Owner

## Aboriginal Voice Framework on the world stage

The department's Aboriginal Education Directorate have been invited to present the Aboriginal Voice Framework at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (WIPCE) 2025 in Auckland, Aotearoa, New Zealand, this November.

Their WIPCE 2025 session will explore how the Framework has supported self-determination, strengthened Aboriginal leadership within the education system, and is offering a model for embedding Indigenous voice in policy for all levels of the education system.



# Aboriginal Funding Model

The revised Aboriginal Funding Model is providing greater clarity around how to prioritise funding, more effective tracking of student mobility, and more long-term certainty for Aboriginal support staff roles across the state. These enhancements mean students are better supported, wherever they enrol across South Australia.

**"We can now plan with confidence and ensure Aboriginal education roles are sustained while directing flexible funding to initiatives that truly reflect our community's needs"**

School principal

# Aboriginal Workforce Plan

As part of the Culturally Responsive Framework, the first online learning module: 'Aboriginal Business is Everyone's Business: An Introduction to the Culturally Responsive Framework' continues to see growth. The second module: 'Respect' is on track to be launched early in 2026, and was co-designed by Aboriginal business Kardla Miyurna Entrepreneurs.

**500% increase in staff completion.** As of October 2025 a total of 13,044 employees have undertaken training in the Culturally Responsive Framework

The Department has refreshed its Workforce Strategy to meet the evolving needs of public education, ensuring a framework that supports our entire workforce across four key areas: Diversity and Inclusion, Organisational Effectiveness, Workforce Capability, and Supply, Attraction, and Retention.

At the heart of this strategy is an unwavering commitment to developing culturally responsive and inclusive working and learning environments where Aboriginal people feel valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

The Department is consulting on a new Anti-Racism Policy and Action Plan. This has included seeking feedback from Aboriginal staff at the DAWN forum in September 2025.



**"Time for our Aboriginal workforce to connect with culture and invigorate ourselves to keep on keeping on. Energises us to give back to students, families, communities."**

DAWN forum attendee



**“We have Aboriginal Kurna language educators who have completed Certificate two and three in Learning an Australian First Nation’s Language, trained specifically to deliver the language”**

Ms Sherrell Bonney-Williams

## Aboriginal Learner Achievement

The Priority Learners Team continues to provide tailored support to focus LETs and schools to improve Aboriginal learner achievement through:

- establishing two new Aboriginal Learner Networks and continuing to support another five networks.
- increasing support to 25 schools, collectively covering 45% of all Aboriginal learners up from 30% in April.
- focus schools have been supported to develop Aboriginal Education Team handbooks, improved procedures for attendance, engagement and wellbeing support.
- embedding of Culture and Wellbeing programs, linking classroom, family, and wellbeing supports.

## Strengthening Aboriginal Languages

Following the successful launch of the Kurna curriculum Scope and Sequence, additional Aboriginal language curriculum is being developed in collaboration with linguists, language owners and community. Languages featured in this curriculum include:

- Adnyamathanha
- Barngarla
- Bunganditj
- Ngarrindjeri
- Nharangga

In September 2025, launched the Kurna curriculum Scope and Sequence, the first of its kind in Australia. This landmark initiative for Aboriginal language revival means Kurna language is now taught again, 180 years since it was banned by Governor George Grey in 1844.

## Aboriginal Contexts in the Australian Curriculum

Aboriginal learners continue to see themselves and their culture in the curriculum. Since April 2025, new professional learning for The Voices That Matter – positioning First Nations Authors and Illustrators at the heart of learning were held for 116 primary school educators from 72 schools in Adelaide, Yorke Peninsula and Mt Gambier regions.

Bringing our curriculum to life – South Australian specific curriculum resources are being developed on cultural burning in collaboration with UniSA and Nukunu Wapma Thura Aboriginal Corporation.

## Aboriginal children and young people are on pathways to success

During 2025, there continued to be a high uptake of Aboriginal Pathways programs by Aboriginal students across regional and metropolitan schools.

These SACE aligned programs support, engage and provide secondary Aboriginal learners with the opportunities in career exploration, discovery and immersion to inform meaningful and successful pathways into further education, employment and training post-secondary education. High expectations of engagement and academic achievement are embedded in all programs underpinned by cultural safety and responsiveness whereby Aboriginal culture, identity, community, connection and leadership are fundamental to the success of the programs.

As of October 2025, 743 students are on track to receive SACE accreditation through South Australian Aboriginal Secondary Training Academy Programs.

Bangarra Dance Theatre, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental Visual Arts and Creative Arts programs have engaged 63 students, including 17 senior secondary students who will receive SACE accreditation.



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