

# Australian First Nations Peoples Policy

## Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') honours the knowledges and cultures of Australian First Nations peoples ('First Nations,' 'First Nations peoples,') and recognises and celebrates First Nations history, heritage, uniqueness, and diversity. The University is dedicated to prioritising and advancing the needs of the Northern Territory, which has a population comprised of over 30 per cent First Nations peoples.

(2) The University is committed to becoming the most recognised university for Australian First Nations training, education, and research.

## Section 2 - Purpose

(3) The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework to inform University activities that are First Nations peoples and communities focused, particularly in the Northern Territory, in a respectful and culturally competent way.

## Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all employees of the University and members of the University community including students, contractors, and adjuncts.

## Section 4 - Policy

### Principles

(5) Actively honour and celebrate First Nations Peoples of Australia's knowledges and cultures.

(6) Cultivate a culture of reconciliation by actively collaborating with First Nations peoples, promoting truth-telling, and committing to actions that support self-determination, cultural preservation, and meaningful partnerships.

(7) Ensure University activities involving First Nations peoples are conducted in accordance with best practice governance frameworks and where appropriate, relevant cultural protocol.

(8) Maintain a public commitment to First Nations engagement, participation, and success through symbolic, documentary, and strategic actions.

(9) Collaborate with First Nations peoples in an ethical, genuine and appropriate way.

(10) Enhance First Nations student participation, retention and success in Higher Education and Vocational Education Training.

(11) Develop pathway programs for First Nations peoples in professional areas in which they are underrepresented.

(12) Strengthen the recruitment, retention, and career advancement of First Nations employees, in alignment with the

- (13) Respect the environment of First Nations lands, including saltwater, desert and tropical regions.
- (14) Promote and elevate First Nations knowledge systems in training, learning, teaching, and research.
- (15) Enhance delivery and expand training and education opportunities in regional, rural, and remote communities.
- (16) Support the repatriation and protection of sacred and significant cultural material.
- (17) Support the preservation of First Nations languages and knowledges.
- (18) Respect First Nations peoples traditions, lands, country and environment, and their tangible and intangible heritage, languages, and knowledges.
- (19) Engage and consult with First Nations organisations and communities on the programs, policies, and initiatives that impact them.

## **Responsibilities**

- (20) Responsibility for the achievement of this policy rests with University Council, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Senior Executive Team. All University employees are urged to embrace, apply, and advocate for the principles outlined in this policy.
- (21) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for shaping an organisational culture that fosters engagement, inclusion, participation and celebration of First Nations knowledges and cultures.
- (22) The Senior Executive Team is responsible for supporting the Vice-Chancellor to shape an organisational culture that fosters engagement, inclusion, participation and celebration of First Nations knowledges and cultures.
- (23) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership (DVCFNL) is responsible for;
  - a. monitoring and tracking the strategies relating to First Nations peoples, particularly regarding access to University programs and activities; and
  - b. the fostering and promotion of understanding, sensitivity, and respect for First Nations cultural heritage amongst students and employees.
- (24) The Provost and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership are jointly responsible for ensuring that First Nations knowledge, priorities, and perspectives are meaningfully integrated into CDU's teaching, curriculum, and academic programs.
- (25) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection (DVCRCC) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership are jointly responsible for:
  - a. supporting research that aligns with First Nations knowledge, practices and priorities; and
  - b. ensuring that research is conducted in a culturally appropriate and ethical manner.
- (26) The Senior Executive Team are accountable for embedding this policy within their respective portfolios and ensuring alignment with the University's commitment to First Nations advancement and success.
- (27) Senior Managers will:
  - a. work proactively with First Nations Leadership student support to provide appropriate support for First Nations students;

- b. ensure that strategic activities within their faculties and teams that align with this policy and the First Nations Leadership Core Plan and are carried out in collaboration with First Nations leadership; and
- c. ensure that First Nations engagement and collaboration occurs at all levels of the University, including leadership and decision-making processes.

## Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(28) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct - Employees](#) or the [Code of Conduct – Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025](#) and the [Code of Conduct – Students](#).

(29) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees](#) and [Complaints Policy - Students](#).

(30) All employees have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

## Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	26th June 2025
Review Date	26th June 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	25th June 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Reuben Bolt Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership
Implementation Officer	Reuben Bolt Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership
Enquiries Contact	Reuben Bolt Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Senior Manager"** - A staff member of the University holding the position of Director, College Dean or equivalent.

**"First Nations people"** - Means a person who is an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, who identifies as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, and who is accepted as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the community where they live or have lived.

**"Employee"** - Anyone employed by the University and includes all continuing, fixed-term, casual, adjunct or honorary staff or those holding University offices or who are a member of a University committee. The term 'staff member' may also be used in Governance documents and its meaning is identical.