

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER INCLUSION POLICY

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### 1. PURPOSE

To improve the recruitment, admission, participation, and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to create a learning environment which is positive and supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, knowledge, and cultures.

Morling College (MC) acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which MC campuses are situated: the people of the Darug nation in North Ryde, NSW (Morling Sydney North campus); the people of the Noongar nation in Bentley, WA (Morling Perth: Vose campus); the people of the Eora and Darug nations in Padstow, NSW (Morling South campus), Sydney; the people of the Wiradjuri nation in Orange, NSW (Morling NSW Central West: Orange hub).

This policy is based on the recognition of the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as First Nations peoples in the multi-ethnic, multicultural context of today's Australian society. Unlike other ethnic and cultural groups, they are not part of modern Australia by their own free choice as the First Nations peoples of Australia they have suffered the genocidal effects of British colonisation. We recognise that this reality is the primary historical cause of many of the unique issues faced by the First Nations peoples of Australia today.

We also recognise that First Nations community life and identity was further disrupted by the exclusion of First Nations peoples for more than two centuries from the decision-making processes of Australian society, during which time they were subjected to

official policies that were frequently unjust and oppressive in their effects. We further recognise that Christian individuals and institutions were frequently willing agents in the implementation of these policies.

We also recognise that, primarily because of differences in culture and different experiences of colonisation, there is wide diversity among the Aboriginal communities. We further recognise that Torres Strait Islanders have an identity that is distinct from that of Aboriginal communities. In the light of these historical realities, we recognise that we have a responsibility to take measures to promote justice and reconciliation between First Nations communities and other Australians through the programs we offer.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Key Term or Acronym	Definition
ACT	Australian College of Theology
MC	Morling College

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and staff at Morling College.

Students enrolled in courses in Bible and Theology are also subject to the policies of the Australian College of Theology (ACT).

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

Morling College is committed to creating an inclusive and culturally safe environment for all staff and students. Acknowledging and respecting First Nations peoples and designing curriculum and community which seek to positively address the experience of ongoing injustice experienced by First Nations peoples are important aspects of this policy.

MC is committed to enhancing the recruitment, admission, participation, and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Specific consideration will also be given to including issues relating to First Nations peoples experience and perspectives in the curriculum taught at MC.

An Indigenous Advisory Panel will be consulted in reviewing policies, practices, and curriculum to assist MC in realising these commitments.

## 5. PRINCIPLES

### Indigenous Advisory Panel

- 5.1 The Indigenous Advisory Panel will be established according to its Terms of Reference and will advise MC on matters of student services and curriculum (including course development and course review processes). It will also advise on policies and practices with a view to increasing the recruitment, admission, participation, and completion of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander students and providing a positive student experience at MC.

## Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country

- 5.2 A Welcome to Country ceremony is to be undertaken ONLY by a local Traditional Custodian, locally recognised Traditional Community spokesperson or locally recognised cultural service provider. The Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of an event and is usually the first item on the program's agenda. The local Traditional Custodian will choose what words they use, and the Welcome can be conducted through speech, song, ceremony or a combination of these. When a Welcome to Country ceremony is performed the MC will pay for this cultural service.
- 5.3 An Acknowledgement of Country demonstrates respect for the local Traditional Community and land. It can be performed by a First Nations person not from the local area and non-Indigenous people and can be performed in less formal proceedings.
- 5.4 A Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country is to be included as part of the opening proceedings of formal MC events such as graduation ceremonies, chapel services, conferences and the Community Week that is held at the commencement of a new academic year.

## Cultural Awareness Training for Staff

- 5.5 All staff will undergo timely and appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency training. While all staff need to be culturally aware, staff in student services and teaching roles will generally need higher levels of cultural competence.

## Curriculum

- 5.6 Consideration of including First Nations related curriculum will be a part of all course development and course review processes. Review processes will include input from the Indigenous Advisory Panel.

## Scholarships

- 5.7 MC offers an array of scholarships each year which are promoted on MC's website and in our networks to new and continuing students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are eligible to apply for scholarships. Applicants who identify as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons will be given preference for scholarship funding in accordance with MC's and the Baptist Association of NSW and ACT's strategic goals and GEN1K vision. Scholarship funding can be used to cover course fees, on-campus accommodation or other relevant study or living expenses.

## Recruitment, Admissions, Participation and Completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

- 5.8 The Indigenous Advisory Panel will review policies, practices, and student services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in successfully completing their program of study and enjoying a positive student experience.

## 6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

### Internal

- Course Development Policy: CCSC; Education
- Course and Unit Review Policy: Education; CCSC
- Indigenous Advisory Panel Terms of Reference

### External

- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support Policy
- Higher Education Standards Framework 2021

## 7. REFERENCES

Welcome to Country and other Indigenous Ceremonies Policy, Macquarie University.

Demonstrating inclusive and respectful language, RAP good practice guide, Reconciliation Action Plan ([www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au))

## 8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
3.00	MC Board	15 April 2024	15 April 2024	Removed reference to the University of Divinity. Responsible officer and contact updated.
2.02	Policy Coordinator	Feb 2023	Feb 2023	Header table updated to include keywords.
2.01	Leadership Team	Feb 2022	Feb 2022	The terms Traditional and First Nations replaced the terms Indigenous, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
2.00	Morling College Board (or AB)	18 May 2021	18 May 2021	Policy moved to template and extended to include Introduction and Principles. Indigenous Advisory Panel introduced.
1.00	Morling College Board	May 2014	May 2014	New Policy

*Download this policy anew with each use, as it may have changed.*