



Western Australia

**First Nations People Cultural Awareness School  
Training Bill 2021**

## **Explanatory Memorandum**

In numerous facets pertaining to the livelihood of First Nations peoples – education, socio-economic standing, justice, healthcare – conversations in regard to improving outcomes consistently emphasise developing cultural awareness, both within larger organisations and individual members of society. While it is important to acknowledge that cultural awareness and responsiveness are dynamic and long-term responsibilities, across Australia we currently lack the foundational programs to encourage and support individuals to develop in this capacity. Within the education system, the approach of merely embedding history and culture within the curriculum and teaching is often limited in its effectiveness or absent altogether. Further, isolated experiences such as activities during NAIDOC Week or Guest Speakers may spark a passion to learn more, do little to establish cultural competency. Under the status quo, in the Western Australian education system there exists a clear gap in regard to initiatives that build awareness, knowledge, understanding and by extension the foundations of long-term and meaningful engagement.

To address this gap, the Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs Committee has developed the First Nations Peoples Cultural Awareness School Training Bill to introduce programs created and delivered by Aboriginal Elders and NGOs that aim to increase knowledge of First Nations people's history and develop cultural awareness. The Bill purposefully focuses on young students where education on First Nations people's culture and history is severely lacking, intending to establish a strong base for greater cultural, historical and social understanding into the future. The program recognises the distinctions between various levels of primary education as well as the diversity between communities, hence includes schools, parents and teachers in the process of creating frameworks to ensure their effectiveness. Further, it includes provisions allowing for changes to the program and pathways to extend the program to secondary education across Western Australia.

An issue that often arises concerning the curriculum and classroom teaching of First Nations people's culture and history is a paternalistic approach that often essentialises identity and disempowers communities. In order to mitigate this issue, a fundamental choice underpinning the First Nations Peoples Cultural Awareness School Training Bill is the direct engagement with local NGOs and Western Australian Aboriginal elders in both creating and administering initiatives. This leads to the creation of a program that not only recognises the diversity of First Nations peoples across Australia, but allows for the continuing development of a program parallel to evolving culture and history.

The journey to creating organisations and individuals that are aware and responsive to First Nations people's history and culture is a dynamic, multifaceted and lifelong responsibility, the First Nations Peoples Cultural Awareness School Training Bill works to take the first steps and build the foundations for respectful and meaningful engagement into the future.



Western Australia

# First Nations Peoples Cultural Awareness School Training Bill 2021

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Western Australia

**A Bill for —**

**An Act to integrate First Nations cultural awareness and Aboriginal history, appropriate for each Western Australian First Nations into primary schools. It will be done through a program created by the Department of Education in conjunction with First Nations Elders and NGO's.**

## **Part 1 — Preliminary**

### **1. Short title**

This Bill may be cited as the *First Nations Peoples Cultural Awareness School Training Bill 2021*.

### **2. Commencement**

This Bill commences on the day on which this Act receives Royal Assent.

### **3. Interpretation**

In this Bill, unless the contrary intention appears —

“**Amendment**” means a change made by correction, adding or deleting;

“**Consultation**” means a meeting for deliberation, discussion or decision;

“**Cultural Awareness**” means recognition of the nuances of one's own and others cultures;

“**Elder**” means an older person or an influential member in an Aboriginal community;

“**Feedback**” means evaluative information derived from such a reaction or response;

“**First Nations Peoples**” means original inhabitants or original people of a particular landmass, in this case Australia;

“**Framework**” means basic underlying a system;

“**Guidelines**” means a guide or indication of a future course of action;

“**NGO**” means a non-government organisation that operates independently of government and is not for profit;

“**Procurement**” means obtaining or procuring something;

“**Remuneration**” means monetary payment for work or service;

## **Part 2 – Consultation and Selection Process**

### **Division 1 — Consultation to determine the subject guidelines**

#### **4. The consultation process**

- (1) A three round consultation process will be conducted by The Department of Education which will provide The Department of Education with the context to determine the guidelines and framework of the program.
- (2) Determination of the guidelines and framework is to be conducted by The Department of Education.
- (3) Feedback will be received by the Department of Education which is given by—
  - (a) First Nations elders, NGO's and academics; and
  - (b) Schools; and
  - (c) Parents/ guardians, teachers and students.
- (4) Finalisation of the guidelines and framework is determined by The Department of Education based off—
  - (a) Feedback received by stakeholders listed in clause 4 subsection (3);
  - (b) Amendments made by The Department of Education.

#### **5. Consultation with NGOs, First Nations elders, parents/ guardians and relevant First Nations Academics**

- (1) The Department of Education will conduct First round consultation which will include First Nations elders, NGO's and academics.
- (2) The Department of Education will conduct a second round of consultation which will include the schools.
- (3) The Department of Education will conduct a third round of consultation which will include parents/ guardians, teachers and students.

**6. Determining the guidelines and framework**

The guidelines and framework of the program will be determined by The Department of Education from the consultation.

**7. Feedback**

- (1) The Department of Education will receive feedback from workgroups and workshops through online submission.
- (2) The Department of Education will then make the appropriate amendments based on feedback given.

**8. Finalisation of guidelines and framework**

The subject guidelines and framework will be finalised based off the three-round consultation, feedback and amendments made.



**Division 2 — Process for procurement of NGOs and First Nations elders  
to deliver the program**

**9. Developing the scope of works**

- (1) In partnership with First Nations elders, communities and NGO's, the Department of Education will develop a clear scope of requirements for the program provider.
- (2) The scope will be presented in multiple appropriate formats including—
  - (a) video; and
  - (b) written document; and
  - (c) delivered verbally through face-to-face discussions and meetings with key groups.
- (3) These requirements must include—
  - (a) criteria for the identification of suitable providers.
  - (b) a methodology to ensure that suitable representation occurs for individual Nations in Western Australia.

**10. Procurement process**

- (1) Procurement will occur through a tender process in accordance with WA government policy for the procurement of services from First Nations organisations.
- (2) The initial stage will be to notify potential providers of the opportunity and invite expressions of interest. This will be done through an engagement process with First Nations elders and NGOs conducted by the Department of Education.
- (3) Following expressions of interest, a request for tender will be used to invite suitable applicants.

**11. Final stage**

Final selection of NGO's and First Nations elders will be decided by the Western Australian minister for Education and minister for Aboriginal affairs.

**12. Remuneration**

In accordance with current Public Sector Awards and guidelines the Minister for Education will set remuneration for First Nations elders and NGOs throughout the development and delivery of the Cultural Awareness Training Program.

## **Part 3 – Cultural Awareness and History**

### **Division 1 — Development of program by First Nation Elders and NGOs**

#### **13. Development of the program**

- (1) NGO's and elders will work together to construct the general structure of the program, including how it will be implemented.
- (2) Using the general structure, Elders and NGOs from each First Nation will refine and create a program suitable for their Nation, focusing on—
  - (a) First Nations people's history; and
  - (b) cultural awareness.
- (3) The Department of Education will have the final edit and refine the program.

#### **14. Program delivery by First Nations elders and NGOs**

- (1) First Nations elders and NGOs will deliver the program itself to the students.
- (2) The First Nations elders and NGO's delivering the programs will need the following checks, courtesy of the Department of Education—
  - (a) working with children check; and
  - (b) COVID-19 vaccination and/or test, as long as relevant.
- (3) The Department of Education will train First Nations elders and NGOs in student engagement approaches for primary school students.

## **Division 2 — Program Delivery Guidelines**

### **15. Year Level Adaptability**

The Cultural Awareness and History Training program shall be delivered more frequently at a younger age, and reduces as students' progress school grades-

- (a) Lower primary school (Years. 1-3) will have Cultural Awareness and History training once a fortnight.
- (b) Upper primary school (Years. 4-6) will receive Cultural Awareness and History Training twice a standard term.

### **16. Program Session Requirements**

Subject to the discretion of First Nations Elders and the Education Department, training sessions shall—

- (a) Run within a 30-minutes timeframe for lower primary school (Year 1-3); and
- (b) Run within a 60-minutes timeframe for upper primary school (Year 4-6); and
- (c) Actively involve students; and
- (d) Accommodate students living with a disability; and
- (e) Use age-appropriate language.

## **Part 4 – Feedback and Review of the Program**

### **Division 1 — Student, staff and parent/guardian feedback**

#### **17. Feedback from schools, students, teachers, and parents.**

- (1) The Department of Education will offer an age-appropriate survey about the program in the following formats—
  - (a) Anonymously documented verbal discussion (years 1-4); or
  - (b) short, anonymous written assessment (years 5-6).
- (2) Parent/ guardian consent must be given to those who participate in both forms of the survey.
- (3) Parents/guardians will be offered an online anonymous survey about—
  - (a) how they think this program has impacted their child’s understanding of First Nations history; and
  - (b) cultural awareness.
- (4) Each supervising teacher will complete an anonymous survey about how they think this program has impacted their students understanding of First Nations history and cultural awareness.
- (5) Opportunities for this feedback will be conducted annually at the end of each program.

#### **18. Incorporating feedback to the program**

- (1) The Department of Education will examine the results from the survey that was done by each student to see—
  - (a) Their knowledge of First Nations people's history; and
  - (b) Cultural awareness.
- (2) The Department of Education will use results to assess—
  - (a) The effectiveness of the program; and
  - (b) Decide whether more reviews should take place.

- (3) The Department of Education will provide a report regarding this feedback to the Western Australian Minister for Education and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## **Division 2 — First Nations Elders and NGO Feedback**

### **19. Review of the program**

- (1) First Nations elders and NGOs will review the program's —
  - (a) Content; and
  - (b) Cultural safety; and
  - (c) Accessibility.
- (2) There will be opportunity for review and feedback about —
  - (a) The Department of Education's involvement in the program;  
and
  - (b) The program's potential for expansion into high school.
- (3) This feedback will be provided to the Department of Education for examination.

### **20. Incorporation of feedback to the program**

- (1) The Department of Education will examine the feedback from First Nations elders and NGO's and improve the program where advised.
- (2) The Department of Education will further consult with relevant experts and First Nations Academics.
- (3) Under the advice of First Nations elders and NGO's, a decision must be made on the potential of the program's expansion into high schools.
- (4) The Department of Education will provide a report regarding this feedback to the Western Australian Minister for Education and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.