



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultural capability framework

December 2024 – December 2026



RACGP
Royal Australian College
of General Practitioners



Message from our CEO

The RACGP cultural capability framework is the cornerstone in our commitment to embracing and celebrating diversity. This framework represents a meticulously structured approach to understanding, respecting, and integrating diverse cultural perspectives, particularly those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This framework is a proactive stance and a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. It is about creating a workplace where every employee feels valued, respected, and empowered. Our goal is to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, enhancing our cultural awareness and sensitivity.

I am immensely proud that our College culture celebrates diversity, enhances collaboration and drives organisational success through broader perspectives and insights. This framework focuses on three pillars: knowing, doing, and being. It emphasises understanding history and culture, taking culturally appropriate actions, and being open and authentic in examining our values.



Our objectives are clear: we aim to enhance cultural understanding and safety, embed cultural protocols, combat racism, and engage meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities while celebrating their unique perspectives. At the RACGP, we are proud of our commitment to inclusive recruitment practices, fostering higher retention, and creating career growth opportunities for all.

The RACGP is dedicated to enhancing cultural capability and safety within our organisation. We are committed to embedding cultural protocols, combating racism, and offering unwavering support to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.

I am truly honoured to be part of a workplace that genuinely respects and values diversity. Together, we are building a brighter, more inclusive future.

Georgina van de Water
Chief Executive Officer



Message from the Executive Sponsor

Launching our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability framework gives me a great sense of pride. This foundational initiative, alongside our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy and plan, has been developed in alignment with our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Together, these documented frameworks display our active commitment toward reconciliation. Our mission; to cultivate a more inclusive and culturally safe environment for everyone to belong at the RACGP.

The journey toward reconciliation resonates deeply with me and the part we play in stewardship of our people and our lands. Our commitment to building an inclusive, culturally safe workplace extends beyond creating opportunities solely for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Our stewardship benefits all RACGP employees, fostering an environment where everyone can learn from the rich cultural traditions of Australia's First Nations peoples. From understanding the significance of land, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples see themselves as custodians rather than owners, to valuing community, storytelling, and sustainable practices, there is much we can gain from these perspectives. This inclusive, culturally respectful environment strengthens our

sense of connection, our commonality as one organisation and enhances our ability to support members in keeping Australia healthy.

Our cultural capability framework is designed to increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and policies, grounding us in the principles of knowing, being and doing. These principles help our workforce develop cultural competence, promote culturally appropriate behaviour, and nurture an environment of respect and openness. Through this framework, we aim to integrate cultural protocols, confront racism, and ensure our services meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Together, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability framework alongside other key contributions, including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy and plan, are a testament to our ongoing commitment to reconciliation. They reflect our respect for the invaluable wisdom and practices of First Nations cultures and our dedication to contributing positively to their enduring legacy.

Paula Holden
Chief People Officer



Context and background

Cultural capability is a broad term that encompasses cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural competence.

The RACGP's cultural capability framework supports our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) by enabling our employees to develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, historical events and how our policies impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Culturally safe practice is the ongoing critical reflection of health practitioner knowledge, skills, attitudes, practicing behaviours and power differentials in delivering safe, accessible and responsive healthcare free of racism.

Cultural safety can only be determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities, and this framework supports our employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to ensure they feel culturally safe in the workplace.

This framework supports our employees to build on their knowledge and practices to contribute to being a culturally safe workplace.



Vision and principles

Our vision

Our people have the skills, knowledge and practices to perform their work in a culturally informed way, creating an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is built on shared respect, meaning and knowledge.

Our principles

Cultural safety. We commit to implementing this framework in a culturally safe way.

Continuous improvement/learning.

Like our RAP, this framework is a living document that is constantly growing, and we are committed to continuous learning throughout this process.

Strengths based. The learning approach in this framework focuses on abilities, knowledge and capacities rather than deficits to build cultural capability.

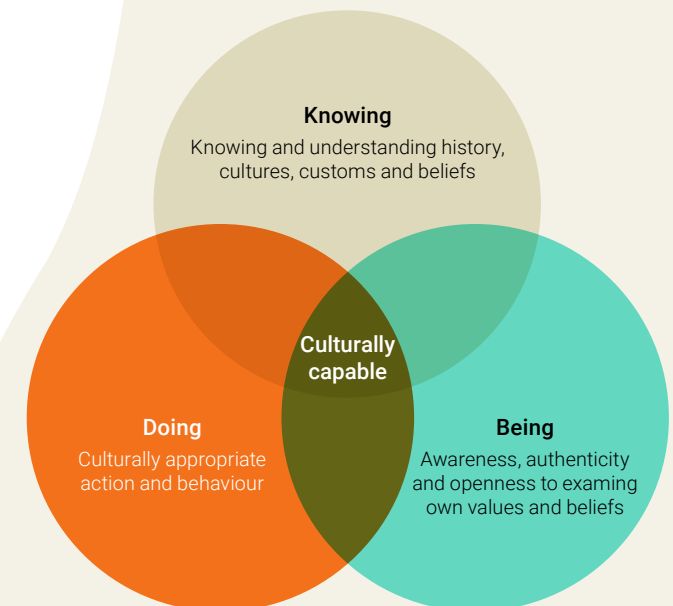
Locally contextualised. This framework recognises the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires place-based initiatives to be most effective, including respect for local autonomy.

Segmented. Building cultural capability is not a one size fits all. This framework recognises different responses are required for different workforce cohorts within RACGP.

Proactive. We commit to continue to proactively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as part of the implementation of this framework.

Collaborative. We commit to ongoing collaboration with RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance bodies to ensure learning approaches are fit for purpose and responsive to workforce needs.

Model for cultural capability



Snook et al (2012)

Our guiding principles

As we implement the cultural capability framework, we will learn from and embrace the twelve guiding principles outlined in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and health training framework.

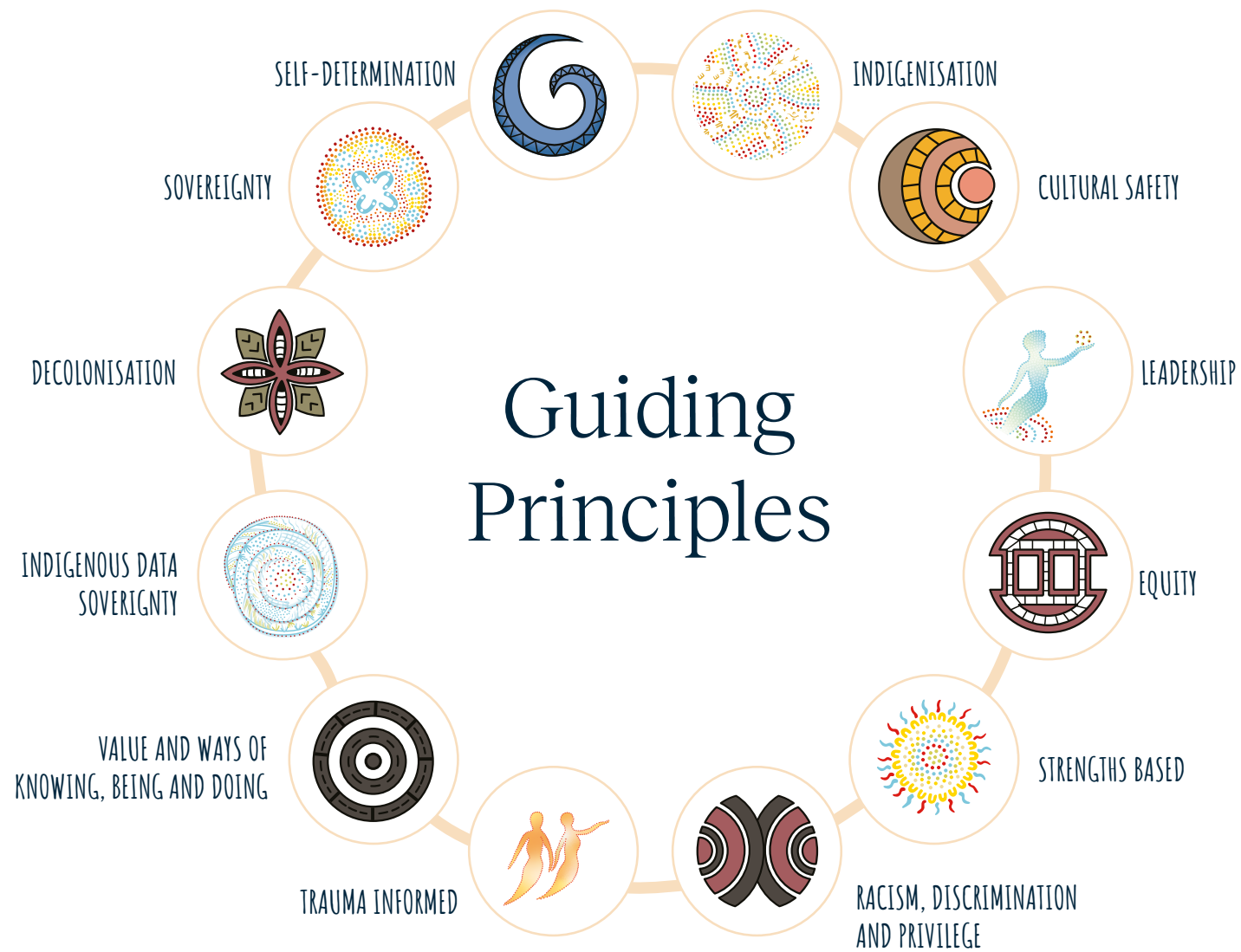
This framework embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and cultures into the RACGP's GP training and education program.

While the scope and objectives of the cultural capability framework and cultural and health training framework differ, the guiding principles are aligned. As we implement the cultural capability framework, we will demonstrate how the principles are reflected in each action.

- Decolonisation
- Sovereignty
- Self-determination
- Indigenisation
- Cultural safety
- Leadership
- Equity
- Strengths-based
- Racism, discrimination and privilege
- Trauma informed
- Value and ways of knowing, being and doing
- Indigenous data sovereignty

To learn more about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and health training framework and its twelve guiding principles, click [here](#).





Cultural capability

The cultural capability framework provides foundational and ongoing education for our employees, that builds cultural capability across the RACGP. The framework includes introductory training, local engagement and knowledge sharing for employees to perform in their role in a culturally informed way.

Cultural awareness means being aware of, and developing sensitivity to, cultural differences and cultural diversity. It involves knowledge, attitudes and values that demonstrate an openness and respect for other people and other cultures, languages, religions, dress and communication styles.

Knowing

To gain knowledge and an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, customs, cultural practices, histories and place-based circumstances. Being able to reflect on one's own culture and how that shows up in the world i.e. cultural humility and reflectiveness.

Doing

Actions, behaviour, communication, ways of working in a culturally respectful way in accordance with protocols.

Being

Demonstrating authentic respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in all interactions. Empathetic and non-judgmental relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.





Outcomes and scope

Specific objectives/ outcomes

1. Increase levels of cultural capability, cultural safety and pride across our workforce (RAP).
2. Embed observation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols across the organisation (RAP).
3. Understand, address and reduce the impacts of racism on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (RAP).
4. Engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
5. Foster a workplace culture that respects and values the skills, experiences, and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and communities.
6. Ensure our products, services and ways of working are appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Scope

The Framework applies to all RACGP employees including those involved with GP Training e.g. registrars, supervisors, medical educators and training staff.

Outcomes that include (RAP) are shared outcomes under the RACGP Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024



Cultural capability layers

Layer	Who?	What will we do?	Outcomes (knowing, being, doing)	Estimated delivery time
1. Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees 	<p>1A. Develop a cultural learning module for all employees to complete during onboarding with a delivery partner. This course will then form part of our mandatory onboarding training for new employees</p> <p>1B. Launch an online cultural awareness course that provides anti-racism and anti-discrimination fundamentals into people compliance training for all employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures • Foster a safer and respectful environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees • Identify the impacts of historical events such as, colonisation and systemic/ structural racism and previous policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 	<p>1A: May 2024 (Completed)</p> <p>1B: September 2025</p>
2. Function specific teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People teams • Continuing Professional Development (CPD) • Contact center • Communications • Marketing • Faculty Chairs/ Deputy Chairs 	<p>2A. Provide specific cultural learning to People and Capability teams that addresses unconscious bias in recruitment and HR practices</p> <p>2B. Provide specific cultural learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Chairs and Deputy Faculty Chairs • CPD • Research • Communications and Marketing • Contact center teams • Program Support Officers • Training coordinators • People and Capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage, consult, or negotiate appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and stakeholders within and external to RACGP • Allow adequate time for community members and stakeholders to consider issues and engage productively • Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and the dynamics of engaging with them respectfully 	<p>2A: February 2025</p> <p>2B: February 2026</p>
3. Ongoing information/ education		<p>3A. Monthly communication through Workplace to include shared podcasts, YouTube channels, books, articles and films etc. Develop on-demand training videos to deepen employees understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, including reference to local settings.</p>		<p>3A: Ongoing</p>

Layer	Who?	What will we do?	Outcomes (knowing, being, doing)	Estimated delivery time
4. Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees with local and regional offices 	4A. Coordinate one localised cultural learning experience for employees (once per year) at each RACGP office e.g. Yarning session, guest speaker, local cultural walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about the local impact of past and current colonial practices, policies and legislation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • Learning about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, practices, protocols and histories. • Staff feel confident to have conversations, ensuring employees can confidently engage with the community/colleagues with reference to local context and settings 	4A: December 2026
5. Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All People Leaders 	5A. Provide specific cultural learning to People Leaders that addresses unconscious bias in people management 5B. Develop a cultural learning module for all People Leaders to support setting direction and embedding culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the sources of knowledge resting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, stakeholders and networks • Our managers will identify their own layers/ levels of unconscious bias • Model inclusive behavior and deal promptly with inappropriate behavior • Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in a culturally informed and equitable manner 	5A: June 2025 5B: December 2026
6. Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive 	6A. Provide specific cultural learning to the Executive Team that addresses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership styles and ways of working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about their cultures and support others to do so • Communicate expectations in relation to cultural awareness and diversity to others 	6A: March 2026

Evaluation and measures

Cultural capability will be measured through surveying all employees to understand their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories and their confidence in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a respectful, equitable and inclusive way. Cultural safety will be measured and evaluated by surveying employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to understand their experiences of cultural safety in the workplace.

Our culture survey

"I think RACGP does really well in inclusivity. As an Aboriginal person, I have always felt very valued and in fact have never been prouder in my workplace to identify myself as Aboriginal and share my culture."

- Anon, 2024 RACGP Culture and Engagement survey

Other measures of success

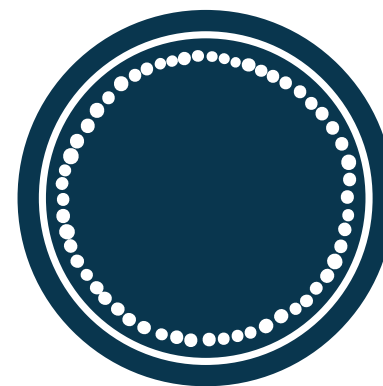
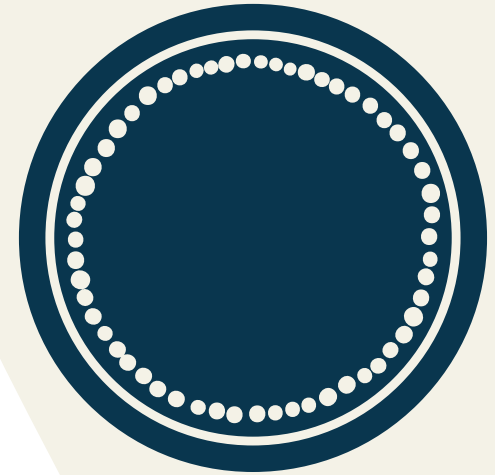
- RACGP Culture and Engagement survey – Inclusion factors
- Diversity and Inclusion specific survey (Diversity Council of Australia)
- Specific feedback on learning/training programs





Governance

Our Learning and Development team within the People and Capability business unit has ownership of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability framework, and our Chief People Officer is the Executive Sponsor. Progress against the cultural capability framework will be reported annually to the People, Culture, Remuneration and Nominations Committee.



Consultation

The RACGP values the contribution of all who participated in the consultation process and development of this framework. We wish to acknowledge the efforts of those who meaningfully collaborated on creating the cultural capability framework.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee Members (as at 20 November 2023 when the cultural capability framework was presented for feedback).

Olivia O'Donoghue - National Clinical Head of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Training

Belinda Hammond - Senior Project Officer, NACCHO RACGP Partnership Project, RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Ada Parry - Cultural and Education Advisor, RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Deb Hawker - Payments Coordinator

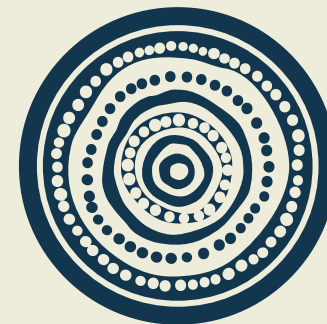
Lucie Ferguson - National Property Manager

Allirra Dowling - Payroll Officer

Vanessa Harris - Manager, RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Helena Carr-McEwen - Program Support Assistant







Contact details

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