

CULTURAL SAFETY POLICY

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Individuals and Practitioners

CPD Australia



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At CPD Australia, we uphold values of inclusivity, diversity, and respect for all individuals, paying homage to the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as honouring the diverse backgrounds and experiences of every member of our community. With a commitment to fostering a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment, our CPD Home embraces the principles of equity, ensuring that every participant feels valued and supported on their educational path.

¹ Attribution to Amanda Kevin, licensed under Creative Commons. Aerial photo of the land of the Eastern Guruma people, Western Australia.

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RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals	A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live. The terms 'Indigenous' and 'Indigenous Australian' are also used to encompass both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Cultural safety	A practice that goes beyond cultural awareness and sensitivity, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals feel safe, respected, and supported when accessing services. It focuses on shared understanding and eliminating power imbalances, promoting trust. Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.
Culturally safe practice	Healthcare or professional practices that acknowledge the importance of cultural identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and embed cultural understanding and respect in all areas of service delivery. 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 responsiveness	Cultural responsiveness describes the actions that are practiced to create, achieve, maintain and govern culturally safe practice.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation in Australia refers to the process of building strong, respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Reconciliation is built on key principles such as historical acceptance, race relations, equality, institutional support, and unity, with the ultimate goal of fostering a shared national identity that honours Indigenous cultures and histories.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Cultural Safety Policy is to establish a framework to ensure all staff, practitioners and stakeholders associated with CPD Australia demonstrate cultural competency and safety through culturally safe practice when working with and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, and practitioners wishing to embed culturally safe practice into their work.

This Cultural Safety Policy outlines CPD Australia's commitment to supporting members, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners, by providing appropriate advice, guidance, and support regarding culturally sensitive matters, exemption processes, and development of culturally safe practices.

This policy applies to all staff and contractors involved in the development, management, and delivery of CPD Australia services, practitioners subscribed to CPD Australia, and collaborating organisations.

This policy has been reviewed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health expert organisations including Reconciliation WA, The Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate (WA Department of Health), The Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health (CAMDH) at The University of Western Australia, and will be subject to ongoing review by other specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health expert organisations.

COMMITMENT TO CULTURAL SAFETY AND RECONCILIATION

CPD Australia is committed to reconciliation and fostering culturally safe practice. We strive for respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and practitioners in everything we do.

Our dedication to cultural safety includes maintaining a workplace that reflects cultural competency and displays culturally safe practices. We recognise the importance of ongoing collaboration and meaningful consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, advisories, and communities to ensure that our CPD program and support mechanisms are culturally appropriate and sensitive.

Committing to cultural awareness through recognition such as Acknowledgement of Country and People is a valuable action, and this practice is performed in line with guidance from the Department of Health². In line with the Lowitja Institute (Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health research institute), CPD Australia believes that embedding cultural safety at individual and institutional levels in practice and policy is essential in working towards achieving justice and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through ongoing dialogue, education, and support of members and the broader community, we aim to contribute to closing the health gap and advancing reconciliation across the healthcare sector. We are dedicated to embedding reconciliation principles into our practices, including the recognition of historical injustices and promoting the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. To support the vision of Reconciliation WA, we aim to celebrate strong and positive relationships between Aboriginal People and the wider Western Australian community, through education, support and ensuring that the cultures, rights and contributions of Aboriginal peoples are valued and respected.

KEY INITIATIVES

In line with The National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020-2025, practical ways CPD Australia demonstrates cultural safety include:

1. Implementation of Program-Level Requirements and provision of recommended resources to practitioners
2. The establishment of a Cultural Support Officer
3. Provision of relevant training to staff
4. Access to supports for practitioners, including exemptions
5. Formalised engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDED CONTENT

In line with the recommendations from Aboriginal Health (a statewide office within WA Health), CPD Australia promotes the message that *Aboriginal health is everyone's business* and as such ensures that Aboriginal business is

² Acknowledgement of Country and People, Department of Health, Government of Western Australia, available at <https://www.health.wa.gov.au/About-us/Aboriginal-Health-Acknowledgement-of-Country-and-People>

embedded into key policy, planning and curriculum for CPD Australia's program, and all practitioners work. To emphasise the importance of culturally safe practice, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, CPD Australia has mandated that all practitioners must complete at least one activity within this domain yearly. These Program-Level Requirements include activities that encourage and promote culturally safe practices, with a focus on activities that promote cultural competence and sensitivity in healthcare delivery (*See Program Requirements for more information*).

Consistent with the Good Medical Practice Code of Conduct, CPD Australia encourages practitioners to continue building on their awareness of culturally safe practice, in particular the special responsibilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It is expected from CPD Australia that activities allow critical reflection to improve clinical practice in relation to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches to health.
- The continuing impact of colonisation, racism, and bias on health outcomes on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Rights-based approaches to improving health outcomes of and access to health services.

CPD activities related to culturally safe may involve those provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations or those in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations, promoting culturally sensitive and inclusive healthcare practices.

CPD Australia provides a list of recommended CPD activities to our members that are recognised CPD activities that relate to CPD Program-Level Requirements in relation to culturally safe practice.

Examples of appropriate learning resources mapped to Cultural Safety:

- An Introduction to Cultural Safety: Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2016-2026 provided by the Australian Government Department of Health.
- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety: A free online course offered by Royal Australasia College of Physicians.
- Resources on Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet
- Cultural Awareness Resources by Reconciliation Australia

CULTURAL SUPPORT OFFICER

The Cultural Support Officer is an Identified role within the Organisational Leadership of CPD Australia that is intended to provide cultural expertise for staff and practitioners on matters related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, sensitivity and safety. While CPD Australia acknowledges that no individual is representative of a culture, history, or voice, we value the expertise that this role can provide.

Key roles and responsibilities of this function includes providing expert advice and advocacy on cultural safety, specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners, by ensuring CPD Australia's practices, support,

resources, and policies are respectful, relevant, and aligned with national cultural safety strategies, while also building partnerships and continuously enhancing cultural competency across the organisation.

PROVISION OF RELEVANT STAFF TRAINING

All CPD Australia staff are offered cultural competency training to ensure a foundational understanding of cultural safety and culturally safe practice. The content of this training is to be determined in conjunction with the Cultural Support Officer and is regularly updated to ensure that it remains both appropriate and relevant. Where appropriate, CPD Australia prioritises that this training to be face-to-face and led by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisation or consultant, to reflect the specialised knowledge in this field and the cultural nuances that an expert can provide.

Additionally, the Program Manager must undergo further targeted training, equipping them to handle issues in a culturally safe way, and to understand when to escalate these issues.

ACCESSING SUPPORT, INCLUDING FOR EXEMPTIONS

Practitioners can access direct support from CPD Australia, including cultural support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, by contacting our dedicated support email (support@cpdaustralia.org) or through our website.

The Program Manager will initially handle requests, including exemptions, and will refer them to the Cultural Support Officer, specialist external advisors (this can include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations or representatives), or CPD Australia Organisational Leadership for further assistance where relevant. CPD Australia abides by an internal escalation process for issues related to Program-Level Requirements.

Requests will be monitored to ensure a responsive support process.

Support for exemptions

CPD Australia is dedicated to ensuring our exemption process is accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners in line with our *Eligibility, Exemptions and Sign-Up Policy*.

To achieve this, a streamlined application process is in place, allowing requests through a direct email and offering optional meetings with the Cultural Support Officer who may assist in tailored support strategies including identifying the required documentation to support an exemption application and providing advocacy when required on the practitioner's behalf.

Flexible timelines and documentation requirements are provided, accepting relevant materials, such as letters from community Elders. Cultural obligations, community roles, and family responsibilities will be considered when reviewing exemption requests, ensuring that practitioners are not disadvantaged. Communication options are varied, including in-person, phone, email, and video meetings, including provision of translation services, if required.

ENGAGEMENT WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

CPD Australia recognises the value of both internal cultural support through the Cultural Support Officer as well as ongoing engagement and relationships with additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health experts and organisations. This consultation with expert groups will be approached on a specific-needs basis, building on already-established relationships.

These organisations will provide expert advisory services to ensure that CPD Australia's practices, resources, and policies are culturally respectful, relevant, and in line with national cultural safety strategies, in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners.