Overview

The Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) Program provides Tasmanian Government schools with opportunities to involve Aboriginal Cultural Educators to work alongside teachers to deliver learning programs that draw on the rich knowledge and experiences of the Aboriginal community.

ASK Aboriginal Cultural Educators work with teachers in class and off-campus settings to assist in providing culturally responsive programs and curriculum.

The ASK Program is offered to Department of Education Tasmania Child and Family Centres, schools, and colleges to support teachers and students to increase their awareness and understanding of Aboriginal people and their histories, cultures, identity and worldview.

Aboriginal Education Services will provide 2/3 of the cost of an Aboriginal Cultural Educator, with the school being expected to contribute the remaining 1/3 from their budgets.

The ASK Program is administered through Aboriginal Education Services, Department of Education and supports Tasmania’s Aboriginal Education Framework and Tasmania’s Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Educational Outcomes Strategy.
Description of the ASK Program

Aboriginal Cultural Educators have a wide range of knowledge and expertise relevant to Tasmanian and Australian Aboriginal cultures and histories. They are a diverse group of people ranging from Elders to younger Aboriginal community members who are committed to providing quality educational experiences in schools and are willing to share their unique cultural heritage, knowledge, and life experiences.

Aboriginal Cultural Educators will have expertise in one or more of the following cultural practices and areas of knowledge and can:

- Share life experiences and stories about Country and place (including the importance of land and water management practices/issues);
- Share knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history, repatriation and impact of past practices on today’s Aboriginal community;
- Share knowledge of mutton birding, bush tucker, cultural foods, bush medicines, bush survival, and use and management of flora and fauna;
- Demonstrate and teach tie-dyeing with bush dyes, ceramics, painting, printing, and working with shells;
- Teach about plant fibres, including string making, coiling, and working with kelp;
- Demonstrate the use of natural materials to make waddies, spears, throwing sticks, clam sticks, whistles, and models of Tasmanian Aboriginal shelters and water craft;
- Demonstrate and teach songs and dance, including Island music; and
- Lead cultural field trips and accompanying school camps.

The list is not exhaustive. For more information, contact Aboriginal Education Services.

Aboriginal Cultural Educators can be booked for a minimum of three hours per session.

Benefits of the ASK Program

Students and teachers will have the opportunity to work with Aboriginal Cultural Educators to experience Aboriginal histories and cultures from their unique perspective.

The ASK Program enables schools to:

- Foster Aboriginal people’s cultural pride and sense of belonging, leading to improved educational engagement and achievement for Aboriginal students;
- Raise teacher, student and community awareness, understanding and respect for Aboriginal people’s histories, cultures and worldview;
- Appreciate the importance of oral histories as a valuable teaching and learning resource;
- Recognise the importance of Aboriginal artistic expression as a valuable teaching and learning experience; and
- Value and promote cultural diversity and intercultural understandings for all people.
Roles and Responsibilities of the Aboriginal Cultural Educator
The Aboriginal Cultural Educator is responsible for:

- Ensuring that contracts and documentation is completed before work commences;
- Contacting the relevant teacher prior to the booking regarding session plans, group sizes and other organisational matters;
- Preparing and providing all resource materials;
- Ensuring all information provided in sessions is accurate and that sources of information are acknowledged; and
- Reviewing the session and providing feedback on all session/s to the ASK program coordinator.

Being Culturally Sensitive
Aboriginal Education Services recognises that many traditional practices are sacred and, for cultural sensitivity issues, does not endorse Aboriginal Cultural Educators conducting shell stringing, necklace making, basket weaving, or kelp water carrier making workshops. Rather, AES encourages Cultural Educators to conduct workshops that involve working with shells to create shell mobiles, using beads, shells and natural materials to create bracelets, and, coiling and string making, and working with kelp.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School
The School is responsible for:

- Completing an application form that includes name/s of contact teacher/s, and an outline of the learning sequence or activity;
- Ensure that the contact teacher is responsible for:
  - planning, documenting and evaluating the program and learning sequence;
  - liaising with the Aboriginal Cultural Educator to make sure group sizes are appropriate prior to the session/s commencing;
  - organising an appropriate working area;
  - preparing students for the session/s by providing background information and any necessary scaffolding that helps to embed the experience within a broader culturally responsive framework;
  - welcoming the Aboriginal Cultural Educator by arranging for students and/or designated teachers to greet their Aboriginal Cultural Educator on arrival at the school/venue;
  - contacting the Program contact person if there are changes to the booking; and
  - ensuring the name of the Aboriginal Cultural Educator is on any documentation, such as excursion forms, and being aware of the correct form of address when introducing the Aboriginal Cultural Educator to students.
- Exercise diligent Duty of Care:
  - a teacher must be present at all times when the Aboriginal Cultural Educator is working with students;
  - the teacher is responsible for the behaviour support of all students in the group; and
  - each activity is to be conducted in a safe and responsible manner and be age appropriate.

How to Apply
Complete the “Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge Program 2018: Application to book an Aboriginal Cultural Educator/s” Form. Please allow 4 weeks for the booking of Aboriginal Cultural Educators.

**ASK Request Form**

Applications should be sent to the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge Program Coordinator

Via Email: aboriginal.education@education.tas.gov.au

Contact Phone: 03 6165 5478

**Cancellations and Rescheduling**

Schools will be notified at least 24 hours in advance if the Aboriginal Cultural Educator is unable to keep a commitment and AES will make every effort to make alternative arrangements if possible.