Aboriginal Education Workers
Information Handbook for Schools 2016
INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education’s Closing the Gap on Aboriginal Education Outcomes 2010-2014: a strategy for Aboriginal student success through school improvement outlines a series of initiatives that will improve the success of Aboriginal students in schools by supporting the particular needs of individual schools, students and their families and by developing and promoting culturally responsive pedagogy. This document forms the basis of the Department of Education Tasmania’s Aboriginal Education Framework (2012-2015) and will be reviewed in late 2015.

As part of this work, specialist Aboriginal Education Services (AES) staff are available to work with schools to meet the goals of their School Improvement Plans for Aboriginal students including supporting particular requirements in student and community engagement, to improve students’ literacy and numeracy outcomes, attendance and retention and to support teachers as they work to strengthen an inclusive curriculum.

Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) play an important part in education for staff, students and the Aboriginal Community. An understanding of local culture and strong community ties contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. AEWs support teachers and Aboriginal students in the areas of academic achievement, participation, attendance, retention, pathways and in developing a rich curriculum inclusive of Aboriginal content and perspectives across the curriculum.

This Handbook has been developed to assist schools with the management and support of AEWs including roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers and the AEW. This Handbook also provides AEWs with useful information to assist their participation in the education workforce.

Cover Photo: Jessica Fulton (AEW) and student from Austins Ferry Primary School.

AEW ROLE

The AEW is a school-based role. AEWs develop, promote and maintain communication networks between Aboriginal students, their parents or carers, the Aboriginal Community and the school. AEWs play a key role in providing knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people, community and culture within schools to promote better cultural understandings and supportive school environments. Successful AEWs conduct their role in close collaboration with teachers and the school principal.

Communication and Interpersonal

The AEW

• facilitates discussions between parents, students and teachers
• shares information with parents
• provides a point of contact within the school for the Aboriginal Community

Supporting the teaching and learning program

The AEWs can assist the teacher in:

• the planning and delivery of education programs, particularly in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-Curriculum Priorities
• supporting the well-being of Aboriginal students by helping them become involved in school activities and encouraging them to stay at school
• contributing to the Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for Aboriginal students
• developing their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people and culture
• the preparation of activities and maintenance of the learning environment
• accessing programs, people, resources, funding and opportunities offered by Aboriginal Education Services and its partners
**Working in the school environment**

The AEW assists the teacher with:

- the well-being and the learning of a student or groups of students in the classroom, out-of-class activities and on school excursions
- the development of a learning environment that is culturally inclusive
- home visits (where required) and in collaboration with the support team structures within the school

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**PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Advertising**

The principal is responsible for advertising the AEW position and the selection process. An AEW is an Aboriginal Identified position.

**Filling Aboriginal Identified Vacancies**

Aboriginal identified vacancies must be filled by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Applicants will be required to satisfy the State Government’s policy on Eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services delivered by the Tasmanian Government which is administered by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA), Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Evidence of Eligibility:

- is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
- identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- is accepted as such by the Community in which he or she lives or has lived.

Please note that eligibility assessments can take a minimum of 30 days. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all information requested to OAA in a timely manner.

**Schools seeking to appoint an applicant into an Aboriginal identified vacancy should contact their HR Contact Officer within Vacancy & Staffing Services or email recruitment@education.tas.gov.au for more information.**

**Selection Panel Requirements**

- an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person must be a member of the panel
- the convener of selection panels for Aboriginal identified vacancies should contact Aboriginal Education Services on 6165 5478 or email aboriginal.education@education.tas.gov.au if they have trouble finding an Aboriginal panel member.
- selections that have been made with panels that do not include a nominated Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander representative WILL NOT be approved by the Director Human Resources and a new panel will have to be established.
- when short-listing of applicants for the position is complete, the panel convener should contact their HR Contact Officer within Vacancy & Staffing Services or email recruitment@education.tas.gov.au. The Contact Officer will liaise with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs in relation to the eligibility of the applicants to meet the essential requirement.
- when any identified position becomes vacant, the position must not be offered to another person without their eligibility being determined through the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.
- the Office of Aboriginal Affairs administers an Aboriginal Employment Register. This register holds the names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking employment who may be suitable for the vacancy. Schools are encouraged to contact the Office of Aboriginal Affairs on (03) 6232 7308 or email oaa@dpac.tas.gov.au for assistance if having difficulty in filling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ‘Identified’ vacancies.
- Ministerial Direction no.10 sets out the requirements around Aboriginal Employment in the State Service.

[http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/186010/ED10_AboriginalTorresStraitIslanderEmployment.PDF](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/186010/ED10_AboriginalTorresStraitIslanderEmployment.PDF)  
PDF DOC ID: TASED-4-3782 (Version 1.0) 4
Induction
The principal is responsible for ensuring that the AEW has been properly inducted into the role. Documentation on induction of new employees can be found at: https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/DoE%20Induction%20Procedure%20FINAL.pdf

As with any new staff member, it is important the AEW is introduced to all staff and their role is explained clearly. The AEW will respond much more effectively if they feel valued and welcome in the school. AEWs may be new to the school environment and culture and will need support to understand the policies, processes and systems associated with their school. Effective AEWs tend to form close working partnerships with a small number of teachers, and are able to work with these teachers to influence pedagogy and build strong relationships, before working more widely across the school.

Professional Development Plan (PDP) process
As is the case for all school staff, the principal is responsible for a regular process of performance management for AEWs. The objective of the Professional Development Plan process is to ensure that the AEW:

• can see how their own role contributes to the overall goals of their school and the School Improvement priorities, especially for Aboriginal students; to the goals of Tasmania’s Aboriginal Education Framework (2012-2015); and to the goals of the Learners First Strategy 2014/17
• understands, and has input into a conversation about their strengths and areas of importance to develop
• is supported to identify self-learning and development needs and ways that these may be met
• understands and upholds the State Service Principles and Code of Conduct

For more information please refer to the following links:

Professional Learning
The principal is responsible for the provision of information, and access to, professional learning opportunities for AEWs. From time to time, Aboriginal Education Services (AES) will facilitate professional learning workshops for AEWs. In these cases, schools are requested to support their AEW’s participation. For more information, please contact on AES on (03) 6165 5478 or email aboriginal.education@education.tas.gov.au.

Home visits
All home visits should be conducted by negotiation with the principal and/or line manager. Principals are responsible for ensuring that AEWs are aware of, and follow the DoE Conducting Home Visits Procedures. This should include a Risk Assessment and a clearly articulated process for ensuring safety. It is recommended that the AEW works closely with the support team in the school and completes a short report or comment in SSS at the conclusion of each home visit.

Timetables
The principal is responsible for ensuring that the AEW has a clearly defined timetable or work schedule that indicates where they are located on given days at given times and the duties they will be performing. Copies of the timetable should be provided to the following staff members in the school:

• AEW line manager
• Teachers in whose class the AEW will be working
Appointment of a Line Manager
The principal is responsible for appointing a line manager to support the AEW within the school environment. The line manager and mentor should:

• meet regularly with the AEW
• support the AEW to build relationships and networks with the school
• ensure that the AEW is supported to meet with teachers to discuss and plan priorities for the classroom and individual students
• assist the AEW to seek and participate in appropriate professional learning
• provide feedback and advice to the AEW
• ensure that the AEW activities align with the Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Education Outcomes 2010-2014 priority areas

Access to office space and computer
The principal is responsible for ensuring the AEWs have an office space (some AEWs may have cultural resources that require storage) and a computer to access their work emails and relevant online information.

Budget
With funding allocated for Aboriginal students through the Fairer Funding Model, principals are encouraged to allocate a budget to support school based strategies towards Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Education outcomes. Strategies can include employment of additional staff (funded through the school’s own SRP); purchase of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural resources; programs and resources that are proven to Closing the Gap in educational outcomes; trials of innovative and inclusive strategies for improving attendance, engagement and education outcomes; celebration of days and events of Aboriginal significance; and Aboriginal Community engagement activities.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers need to have a sound understanding of the role of the AEW and the duties they can perform. They need to allocate time and organise regular sessions with the AEW to discuss curriculum, individual student, family, community or class priorities. AEWs will need opportunities to discuss strategies and to gauge success of any approaches.

Teaching Program
Teachers have the responsibility for their teaching program, however, if the AEW is comfortable to be involved in assisting the delivery of lessons, then the program should be planned with the AEW to ensure an understanding of the overall teaching strategy for the classroom. As the AEW becomes more experienced, program ideas should be shared with them and their contributions valued. The teacher should indicate clearly the role of the AEW when involving them in teaching programs in the classroom.

Teachers must ensure that AEWs are aware of their role in planning and delivering learning alongside the teacher. Constructive feedback to AEWs is encouraged.

Teachers are encouraged to allow experienced and confident AEWs to participate in classes, particularly in:

• Aboriginal studies/Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum
• areas which AEWs are skilled (eg. cultural practices, art, dance, drama, law, politics, storytelling, sport, music)
AEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the AEW

AEWs are required to participate in programs described in their statement of duties and initiated by the school to assist Aboriginal students. They may act as a reference point on Aboriginal issues. An AEW might also provide advice in development of school policy, planning and programs where these affect Aboriginal students. AEWs have an important role to play in connecting the school with Aboriginal families and Community.

A copy of the AEW Statement of Duties can be found in Attachment A.

In order to assist AEWs to be highly effective members of staff, principals are encouraged to support the AEW to undertake the following:

Negotiate and review a timetable that reflects support time in class; the names of the Aboriginal students AEW is working with in class; planning time; other regular activities; meetings.

Work with teachers and support staff to contribute to the development and ongoing work associated with Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs).

Home visits

All home visits should be conducted by negotiation with the principal and/or line manager. If an AEW conducts a home visit they should adhere to the DoE Conducting Home Visit Procedures (see link below) and complete a risk assessment. The risk assessment should be sent to the principal. Best practice would involve AEWs working in collaboration with support teams in schools to ensure consistency and transparency. A home-visit report should be made in the Student Support System (SSS) including the following information:

- date and time
- who is being seen and their address
- purpose of visit
- discussion
- advice
- requests received
- outcomes
- follow-up

Where confidential information is recorded, a note should be made in SSS that sensitive information about an issue is held by the AEW. The AEW should record this information in a private place. AEWs should be aware of their obligations around mandatory reporting (see link below).


Cultural awareness

AEWs support Aboriginal culture within the school learning environment and seek further Aboriginal participation from parents, Community and Aboriginal Education Services staff. AEWs are encouraged to visit Aboriginal Education Services and the Aboriginal Education Resource Centre to access Aboriginal learning materials and resources and access professional learning opportunities. Aboriginal Education Services and the Aboriginal Education Resource Centre are located at 16B Elmsleigh Road, Derwent Park, or phone (03) 6165 5478. A state-wide list of Aboriginal Education Services contact details can be found at https://www.education.tas.gov.au/intranet/EYS/AboriginalEducation/Pages/temp%204.aspx.
# USEFUL CONTACTS

**AES Office**  
16b Elmsleigh Road Derwent Park 7009  
GPO Box 169, Hobart Tas  7001  
*(03) 6165 5478*  
[aboriginal.education@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:aboriginal.education@education.tas.gov.au)

**ABORIGINAL EDUCATION SERVICES STAFF**

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STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Department of Education

STATEMENT OF DUTIES – February 2014

Title  Aboriginal Education Worker
Number  Generic
Division  Learning Services
Branch  Specified Learning Service
Section  Specified School or College
Sub-Section/Unit/School  N/A
Supervisor  Specified Teacher(s)
Award/Agreement  Tasmanian State Service Award
Classification  General Stream Band 2
Employment Conditions  Permanent or Fixed-term, full or part-time, up to 73.5 hours per fortnight, 40 weeks per year. The occupants of these roles work for the duration of school terms only, consequently leave and other benefits are paid on a pro rata basis at the conclusion of Term 4 each year.
Location  The current location is the specified school.

The Role

Provide assistance to teacher(s) to support implementation of the Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Educational Outcomes 2010-2014 strategy and other relevant initiatives that contribute to improvement in the attendance, participation and educational outcomes of Aboriginal students.

Level of Responsibility/ Direction and Supervision

The employee is responsible for the provision of support duties associated with a range of cultural and educational programs and related activities for Aboriginal students and for the efficient completion of tasks as directed. The employee may be responsible for the physical well being of a student or group of students and general supervision of tasks. Closer direction is received on specific or new tasks as well as some guidance on how they should be carried out.
**Primary Duties**

1. Assist teachers and parents/carers with programs that support attendance and participation of Aboriginal students, including the development of partnerships between the school and the local Aboriginal community.

2. Contribute to personalised learning planning by assisting teachers to engage parents in literacy and numeracy development and liaise with appropriate agencies that provide additional support for Aboriginal students and families.

3. Assist teachers with programs which affirm Aboriginal student identity, self-esteem and capacity to succeed.

4. With support from Aboriginal Education Services, assist teachers to implement cultural programs for Aboriginal students.

5. Work with teachers and Aboriginal Education Services to raise awareness about Aboriginal culture and history using general classroom activities, school life, and community and cultural knowledge and literature where possible.

6. Work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and school communities to extend and deepen their knowledge of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal culture both traditional and contemporary.

7. Assist with the supervision of small groups or individual students on activities relevant to duties 1-6.

8. Participate and assist in whole of school activities relevant to duties 1-6.

9. Assist on school camps or excursions relevant to duties 1-6.

10. Perform other duties as envisaged by the assigned classification under the relevant industrial award or agreement and in accordance with the skills, competence and training of the occupant.

**Selection Criteria**

Employment in the State Service is governed by the *State Service Act 2000* and employment decisions must be based on merit. A decision relating to appointment or promotion is based on merit if:

- an assessment is made of the relative suitability of the candidates for the duties; and

- the assessment is based on the relationship between the candidates’ work-related qualities and the work related qualities genuinely required for the performance of the duties; and

- the assessment focuses on the relative capacity of the candidates to achieve outcomes related to the duties; and

- the assessment is the primary consideration in making the decision.

Work-related qualities might include; skills and abilities; qualifications, training and competencies; standard of work performance; capacity to produce required outcomes; relevant personal qualities; and demonstrated potential for future development.

The following specific selection criteria must be addressed by candidates in this context. The nominated role and duties contained in this statement of duties must also be used to assist in the interpretation of these selection criteria.

1. Knowledge of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and Aboriginal culture both traditional and contemporary.

2. Proven communication skills, including the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal people, and to liaise with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds.

3. An understanding of general educational processes and methods, or the capacity to acquire this knowledge.
4. Capacity to work as part of a team and be adaptable and flexible.
5. Demonstrated skills of creativity and initiative.
6. Competent numeracy, literacy and organisational skills.

**Requirements**

**Essential**
- The Head of the State Service has determined that this position is an Aboriginal identified position and that it can only be filled by Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders in accordance with Employment Direction No. 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in the Tasmanian State Service.
- The Head of the State Service has determined that the person nominated for this role is to satisfy a pre-employment check before taking up the appointment, promotion or transfer.

**Desirable**
- Post year 10 studies in health and/or education.

**Working within the Department of Education**

The Department is responsible for providing public education, vocational education and training, adult and community education, and library and archive services throughout Tasmania.

Our strategic focus is centered on achieving the Tasmanian Government’s priorities for education, training and information services. These priorities are expressed through the goals of the *Learners First, Connected and Inspired* Strategic Plan and the LINC Tasmania Strategy.

**Our Vision** – Successful, skilled and innovative Tasmanians.

**Our Mission** – To provide every Tasmanian with the opportunity to continue to learn and reach their potential, to lead fulfilling and productive lives and to contribute positively to the community.

**We Value** – Learning, Excellence, Equity, Respect and Relationships.

Our strategies aim to transform the way Tasmanians access education, training and information services, provide a fresh and exciting approach to lifelong learning and build an education system that realises the full value of every Tasmanian’s creative and productive spirit.

**Information and Records Management**

All employees are responsible and accountable to:

- Create records according to the business needs and business processes of their business unit or school that adequately document the business activities in which they take part.
- Register documents in an approved Business Information Management System.
- Access information for legitimate work purposes only.

All employees must not:

- Destroy delete or alter records without proper authority; or
- Remove information, documents or records from the Department without permission.

**State Service Principles and Code of Conduct**

Employment in the State Service is governed by the State Service Act 2000. All employees are responsible for ensuring that the standards of behaviour and conduct specified in the State Service Principles and Code of Conduct are adhered to. All employees are expected to act ethically and with
integrity in the undertaking of their duties. Employees who breach the code of conduct may have sanctions imposed.

The State Service Principles and Code of Conduct are contained in the State Service Act 2000 and can be found on the State Service Management Office website at http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/ssmo together with Employment Direction No. 2 State Service Principles. All employees must read these and ensure they understand their responsibilities.

All employees are expected to utilise information management systems in a responsible manner in line with the DoE Condition of Use policy statement located at Department of Education: Information technology policies

**Work Health and Safety and Workplace Diversity**

The Department is committed to high standards of performance in respect to work health and safety and managing diversity.

In accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2012, all employees whilst at work are expected to participate in maintaining safe working conditions and practices and take reasonable care for their own health and safety, ensuring their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others. All employees are expected to comply with any reasonable instruction given by the Agency to ensure compliance with the Act and collaborate with Agency work health and safety policies, procedures and guidelines.

State Government workplaces and vehicles are non smoking environments.

**Category/funding/restrictions:** Fixed-term. Cost code: Funded through the specified School Resource Package.

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**Office use only: APPROVED BY HRM DELEGATE:** 103974 - Deputy Secretary Corporate Services – January 2010


Date Duties and Selection Criteria Last Reviewed: 02/14 CLH