



## NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION ANTI-RACISM POLICY

The NSW Teachers Federation has a strong tradition of pursuing social justice issues, including showing leadership in supporting members in eliminating racism.

Public education teachers, in their role as educators and unionists, have an ethical responsibility to eliminate racism in all its forms. Challenging racism requires an on-going commitment from educators. This includes teachers applying their knowledge of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students to their teaching practice.

The principles of multiculturalism as defined by the 'Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000' are the policy of the state and accordingly, each public authority must observe the principles of multiculturalism in conducting its affairs.

The NSW Government is obligated to ensure that the services its agencies provide meet the needs of the state's increasingly diverse multicultural and Aboriginal communities. As such, the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) has responsibility for the implementation of these principles in all public education settings. This includes the responsibility for planning, conducting and reporting of strategies that meet the principles of cultural diversity.

Federation is committed to the continual review of anti-racism policies to reflect the dynamic, contemporary teaching and learning context, in line with the history of Federation's Aboriginal Education Policies.

### Background and Rationale

The devolution of greater responsibility to the local level requires more stringent accountability measures when implementing multicultural and Aboriginal education policies, to counter negative impacts on culturally and linguistically diverse communities in NSW public schools, TAFE colleges, Corrective Services and other public education settings.

DEC policies commit all schools to providing opportunities for students to achieve equitable educational and social outcomes:

- *"Strengthen understanding of racism among staff and students to help them identify and challenge and reduce the impacts of racism.*
- *Embed student wellbeing approaches to increase student engagement, participation and retention"* **DEC Aboriginal Education Strategy (2009-2012)**

*"Schools will provide teaching and learning programs that enable students from all cultures and communities to identify as Australians within a democratic multicultural society and to develop the knowledge, skills and values for participation as active citizens."* **Multicultural Education Policy 1.2**

Anti-racism education is central to ensuring that students, regardless of their cultural background, have full access to quality programs.

### Attacks on Funding

Targeted funding for Community Languages, English as a Second Language (ESL), the New Arrivals Program (NAP) and Aboriginal education has enabled public education to recognise and meet the needs of these students.

Federation will continue to campaign against any dismantling of system wide programs, including targeted ESL and refugee support and anti-racism education. The ESL support infrastructure, developed over the last four decades as part of the national and state response to the English language learning needs of migrant and refugee children entering NSW public schools, underpinned the very values of anti-racism policy and legislation.

Federation will continue to oppose and campaign against cuts to Aboriginal and Multicultural education.

### Professional Learning and Curriculum

Federation endorses ongoing and appropriate teacher professional learning to support members in overcoming racism. Current curricula provide many positive opportunities for teachers to highlight the values of multicultural and anti-racism education. These opportunities must be explored and utilised in teaching programs and practice with the aim of eliminating racism in all its forms.

## **ACTION:**

1. Federation will pursue with the DEC its obligation to implement the *Multicultural Education in Schools* and *Aboriginal Education Policies*, in all public education workplaces.
2. Federation's Senior Officers will continue to lobby both State and Federal governments to ensure funding for Aboriginal Education and Multicultural Education is maintained and enhanced.
3. Federation will negotiate with the DEC to establish greater and more transparent accountability mechanisms, which will include the guarantee that the role of the Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) in every public school complies with the Principles of Multiculturalism Act (2000).
4. Federation will continue its commitment to a range of anti-racism activities which will include:
  - a) forums to promote Federation's anti-racism policies and objectives, and
  - b) developing and distributing materials for use in all public education workplaces.
5. Federation will seek information from schools about anti-racism strategies and multicultural activities and use the findings to further develop campaign action.
6. Federation will develop an information leaflet to assist in overcoming racism and to provide further advice on implementation of Federation's anti-racism policy.
7. To strengthen union campaigns, Federation will encourage the active participation of members who reflect the cultural diversity of the union's membership. Strategies could include:
  - a) statistical analysis to establish the group(s) most in need of support,
  - b) targeted Trade Union Training and campaign courses, and
  - c) support for Associations to develop more inclusive practices at a local level.
8. Federation will develop an anti-racism training component for inclusion in Trade Union Training courses, and will pursue the inclusion of appropriate anti-racism pre-service training in university education courses.
9. Federation will use the findings of current academic research being conducted on racism, multicultural education, Aboriginal education and social inclusion to guide and inform the union's campaigning.
10. Federation will engage with other branches of the AEU and affiliated bodies to build a national support base which will promote anti-racism activities.
11. Federation will advocate for the right of asylum seekers, regardless of visa status, to freely access education in public schools and TAFE colleges, in accordance with the Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 – Section 3 (e), which states 'all individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programmes provided or administered by the Government of New South Wales'.
12. Federation will endorse appropriate campaigns that aim to promote and uphold the human right of all people to be treated in a dignified, respectful, non-racist manner.
13. Federation will endorse and commit to being a supporter of the Australian Human Rights Commission Campaign – "RACISM. STOPS WITH ME".

