

# WELCOME TO COUNTRY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



'Uniting, Val Saunders, 1999  
the sharing of knowledge in the common goal of learning'

## History

NSW Public School teachers prompted the development of this document 'Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country'. It responds to needs expressed by teachers who want to show respect, understanding and to acknowledge and promote Aboriginal education within their schools.

In 2001, the NSWTF Aboriginal Education Coordinator and Aboriginal Members Committees developed the first NSW Teachers Federation protocol guide 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' document.

The NSWTF acknowledges the work of John Watkins, who in 2001 as Minister of Education, took up the commitment and practice of 'Acknowledgement of Country' as he visited NSW Public Schools.

In 2004, the NSWTF, Department of Education, and AECG worked collaboratively to produce the 'Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country' support document.

In 2008, we saw a new beginning to Federal Parliamentary Opening procedures with the inaugural 'Welcome to Country' Ceremony. Further to that another memorable and historic event occurred on the 13th February 2008 with the National Apology to the Stolen Generation.

### Legend to artwork

- Circles represent the schools TAFE and Aboriginal Policy
- Paths forming the connections linking each to the other, creating a oneness in their commitments to Aboriginal education
- Arts are teachers, students and community
- Communities are represented by the dots in the background.

## Contacts

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23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Telephone (02) 9217 2100, 1300 654 369  
Facsimile (02) 9217 2368  
<http://www.nswtf.org.au>



On behalf of NSWTF Aboriginal Education  
Coordinator and NSWTF Aboriginal Members  
Committees. Authorised by the General Secretary,  
John Dixon, March 2017. 17103

## Cultural significance of 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country'

Australia is made up of many different 1st Peoples Clans or Groups, each having their own Country, Culture, Language, Beliefs and Customs.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a unique relationship to the land. This involves a responsibility to look after the environmental and spiritual wellbeing of their Country.
- Traditionally, when Aboriginal people travelled they would not enter another's Country until they were welcomed by the Traditional Owners of that land.

*'Recognition of countless generations that moulded this Country, that we survive in today.'*

*(Kevin Tory 2013, Trade Union Committee for Aboriginal Rights (T.U.C.A.R.))*

### 'Welcome to Country':

Welcoming people to Country is a Traditional practice, which has special significance. The 'Welcome to Country' should only be delivered by the Aboriginal people in their own local homelands and community. This could be an Elder, an adult or a child (depending on the protocols of their community) belonging to that Country.

### 'Acknowledgement of Country':

This can be performed by Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people, both children and adults.

### Why should I perform this ceremony?

- Respect, Responsibility, Understanding, Knowledge, Relationships, History.
- Encompassing Aboriginal Acknowledgements and ceremonies into official events and daily proceedings provides opportunities to recognise

and pay respect to Aboriginal Peoples' Culture and Heritage. It also communicates to the broader community the Cultural Heritage of Aboriginal Peoples and promotes mutual respect and understanding.

- 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' is official protocol within NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF), Department of Education, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and other government departments enabling the wider community to share in Aboriginal Culture and Heritage. This process facilitates a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples and develops strong relationships within the wider community.

## When do I do a 'Welcome to Country' and/or 'Acknowledgement'?

- 'Welcome to Country' is usually performed at the commencement of any gathering by the local Aboriginal people of that Country.
- 'Acknowledgement of Country' is also performed at the commencement of a gathering, meeting and/or function by the Chairperson, Speaker, an Elder and/or Student. Where the name of the Traditional Custodians is known, it is specifically used. Where it is not known, a general Acknowledgement is given. Any speaker may give an Acknowledgement of Country before their presentation.

## Where do I get advice?

When planning an event, you are recommended to consult with the Aboriginal Education Committee within your school or workplace and the local Aboriginal organisations in your community, and/or the AECG to provide advice on:

- the Traditional Custodians of the specific lands
- the appropriate level of Aboriginal recognition
- the appropriate ceremonies and performances

## How do I respectfully address and perform this ceremony?

The 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' given below are only examples of what someone could say if addressing any formal or informal gathering. These examples can be used as a guide or a starting point and people are encouraged to develop their own meaningful words that are relevant to that gathering.

### Example of a 'Welcome to Country':

- As a representative of the \_\_\_\_\_ people of this land, I would like to Welcome you to our Country and pay respect to our Elders who have gone before us and those who are present here today. I would also like to recognise our Non-Indigenous people who have joined with us today.

### Examples of an 'Acknowledgement of Country':

- I would like to Acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ people, the Traditional Custodians of this Land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present. I would like to extend that respect to other Aboriginal people and/or colleagues present today.
- I would like to respectfully Acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ people who are the Traditional Custodians and First Peoples of the land on which we stand.
- I would like to show my respect and Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and First Peoples of the Land on which this meeting takes place.

*'...People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person...'*

*'... country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow...'*

Deborah Bird Rose, Nourishing Terrains

### Aboriginal Education Coordinator (AEC)

- Based at NSW Teachers Federation House, Sydney
- Chairperson and member AEU National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee
- Elected Aboriginal representative member AEU Federal Executive
- Federation representative member of the Department of Education Secretary's Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Various state and interstate wide responsibilities
- Works closely with Federation's Aboriginal Members Committee, Aboriginal Education Restricted Committee and Councillors
- Contacts in universities and Aboriginal interagencies

### Aboriginal Members Committee

- Representatives from city and country schools, post school, Corrective Services, and Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- Meets once per term

### Aboriginal Members Roll

- Currently more than 1200 active members
- You as a financial Aboriginal member are encouraged to get involved with Federation at all levels

### Annual Aboriginal Members Conference

- Open to all financial Aboriginal members
- Aboriginal student trainee teachers within the Sydney region are welcome

# Did you know NSW Teachers Federation has an Aboriginal Education Policy?

### Aboriginal Observer

- Attends Executive
- Representative from the Aboriginal Members Roll
- Able to attend Federation Council

### Aboriginal Executive Member

- Must be one of the five designated Aboriginal Councillors
- One of the 18 Federation Executive
- Federation Executive meets in Sydney

### Aboriginal Education Restricted Committee

- Six members, three must be from the Aboriginal Members Roll
- Meets once per term

### Aboriginal Councillors (2-year term)

- Elected from the Aboriginal Members Roll
- Five designated positions

For information on our Aboriginal Education Policy visit our website at [nswtf.org.au](http://nswtf.org.au)

### As a financial member you can apply to attend:

- NSWTF Annual Conference – five delegates from the Aboriginal Members Roll, held in Sydney
- Women's Conference – five delegates from country areas, held in Sydney
- TUT (Trade Union Training) – held in Sydney and regional centres
- Anna Stewart Program – Aboriginal women, held in Sydney
- CPL Courses and Conferences – held in Sydney and regional centres



## WELCOME TO ABORIGINAL MEMBERS

### from the FEDERATION LIBRARY

Dear Members

The Federation Library is available to all Federation members. In particular, the librarians, together with the Aboriginal Education Co-ordinator, maintain a collection of the latest resources relevant to the interests of the Federation's Aboriginal members. The library can help you with:

#### Information about:

- where you can purchase the Aboriginal Australia map
- the meaning of the symbols on the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag
- the first Aboriginal teacher in NSW
- teaching resources with an Aboriginal perspective
- Black Diggers

The library has answered all of these questions recently.

#### Borrowing resources and postal service

The library has many teaching resources, including DVDs, books for children, jigsaw puzzles and reading kits to assist teachers of Aboriginal Studies. Contact the library and ask for resources to be posted to you.

#### Making a recommendation for purchase

The library welcomes recommendations for purchase of new resources. Simply email your recommendation to the library, or ask the library staff if you are visiting the library. A "purchase suggestion" button is also available via the library catalogue for you to submit your recommendation to the library.

#### Hot topics Aboriginal teaching resources

*Hot topics Aboriginal teaching resources* lists the latest and most popular resources for teachers of Aboriginal Studies. Available online, and you can also ask for printed copies to be posted to you.

#### Visiting the library

You can visit the library to browse new resources and use the library computers, printing and photocopying facilities. WiFi is available. Spaces are provided for members to read and study quietly or to meet and work with colleagues.

#### Online access

Library information and the catalogue are accessible from the Services tab on the Federation's website at [www.nswtf.org.au](http://www.nswtf.org.au) and here you will find the latest *Hot topics for Aboriginal teaching resources, Anti-racism, Black Diggers, Classroom management, English language and literacy support, Maths K-6, LGBTIQ, Workplace bullying* and many other curriculum, equity and professional development topics.

We look forward to meeting you and working with you.

*Mary*

Mary Schmidt  
Librarian

*Charline*

Charline Emzin-Boyd  
Aboriginal Education Co-ordinator



#### NSW Teachers Federation Library

1<sup>st</sup> floor 23-33 Mary Street Surry Hills NSW 2010 Locked Bag 3010 Darlinghurst NSW 1300  
Ph 02 9217 2113 Fax 02 9217 2481 E [library@nswtf.org.au](mailto:library@nswtf.org.au) Web [www.nswtf.org.au](http://www.nswtf.org.au) click on Services tab  
Hours: 9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday, including vacations, and 10 am – 1.30 pm Council Saturdays

## The Aboriginal Flag



The Aboriginal flag is divided horizontally into equal halves of black and red. The top half of the flag is black, to symbolise Aboriginal people. The red in the lower half stands for the earth and the colour of ochre, which has ceremonial significance to the Aboriginal people. The circle of yellow in the centre of the flag represents the sun, the constant renewer of life.

The flag was designed by Harold Thomas, a descendant of the Luritja people. The flag was first flown in Victoria Square, Adelaide on National Aborigines' Day on 12 July 1971 and was later used at the Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972. The Australian Aboriginal Flag was formally proclaimed on 14 July 1995.

Today, the flag has been adopted by all Aboriginal Groups and is flown or displayed permanently at Aboriginal centres throughout Australia.

Permission is not required to fly the Australian Aboriginal Flag.

## The Torres Strait Islander Flag



The Torres Strait Islander flag features three horizontal, coloured stripes, with green at the top and bottom and blue in between, divided by thin black lines. The green represents the land, the black represents the people and the blue is for the sea.

The flag features a white Dhari (traditional headdress), with a five-pointed white star beneath it. The Dhari is a symbol of Torres Strait Islanders and is used in cultural ceremony and dance. The white star symbolises peace, and the navigational importance of stars to the seafaring people of the Torres Strait. The five-points also represent the five distinct language and cultural groups of the region.

The flag was designed by Bernard Namok of Thursday Island. His flag was the winning entry in a design competition run by the Island Coordinating Council (ICC). The flag was adopted at its Council meeting on 24 March 1992. The Torres Strait Islander Flag was formally proclaimed on 14 July 1995.

Permission is not required to fly the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

This is only to be used for educational purposes.

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For more information contact the NSW Teachers Federation Aboriginal Education Coordinator  
at [nswtfae@nswtf.org.au](mailto:nswtfae@nswtf.org.au) or 1300 654 369

Authorised by John Dixon, General Secretary, NSW Teachers Federation, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

# EARLY CAREER TEACHERS SUPPORTING OUR FUTURE

## ACCREDITATION FEE REIMBURSEMENT

The Federation is supporting New Scheme Teachers by paying the first year of their Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards (BOSTES) accreditation annual fee when joining via Direct Debit, Auto Credit Card or paying membership fees for 12 months in advance.

## BEGINNING TEACHER CONFERENCES

Held at various locations throughout NSW, the Federation conducts 1-day and 2-day conferences open to all new (beginning) teachers in their first two years of employment with the NSW Department of Education and Communities, whether as a permanent, temporary and/or casual teacher in the schools sector.

The conference covers the accreditation process, employment conditions, teachers' rights and issues for probationary teachers, as well as practical, professional workshops focusing on classroom management and pedagogy. Participants will also discover the support and member services the Federation provides.

The Federation receives overwhelmingly positive feedback from beginning teachers who have attended previous conferences. The conferences have provided additional support, advice and encouragement, appropriate for the needs of new teachers.

Participants will be provided with accommodation, all meals and conference notes.

## NEW ACTIVIST CONFERENCE

This Conference is for teachers in their first 5 years of teaching, or first 10 years if they hold a Federation position, who are interested in becoming more active within the Federation. Workshops will include information for members to become more involved at the school and the local Association level, Aboriginal education, women's issues and lesbian gay bisexual transgender intersex and queer issues (LGBTIQ). The Conference will also develop members' understanding and knowledge of Federation campaigns and the support it provides for new activists.

## NEW EDUCATORS' NETWORK

This program identifies active members who are interested in becoming more involved with the Federation. Provided with comprehensive training, NEN participants develop their knowledge about the union, public speaking and interpersonal skills.

## BEGINNING TEACHER COURSES

This is a 1-day course open to all beginning teachers. The accreditation process, service conditions, teachers' rights & probationary teacher issues are all addressed.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Teachers Federation is endorsed by BOSTES as a provider of registered professional development. The Centre for Professional Learning (CPL) has been established to provide high quality training and support for Federation members in a range of educational areas. The CPL offers courses that are useful across the spectrum of a teacher's career from the early years of teaching to the experienced and leadership levels. Visit our website at [www.cpl.asn.au](http://www.cpl.asn.au) for further course information and registration.

## NEW TEACHER SEMINARS

The Federation conducts various 2 hour New Teacher Seminars across the state focusing on different issues for new teachers. The seminars are held after school and are usually BOSTES registered professional development.

## NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION

**Tel:** (02) 9217 2100, 1300 654 369 (toll free) **Fax:** (02) 9217 2470 **Email:** [mail@nswtf.org.au](mailto:mail@nswtf.org.au)

**Location:** 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

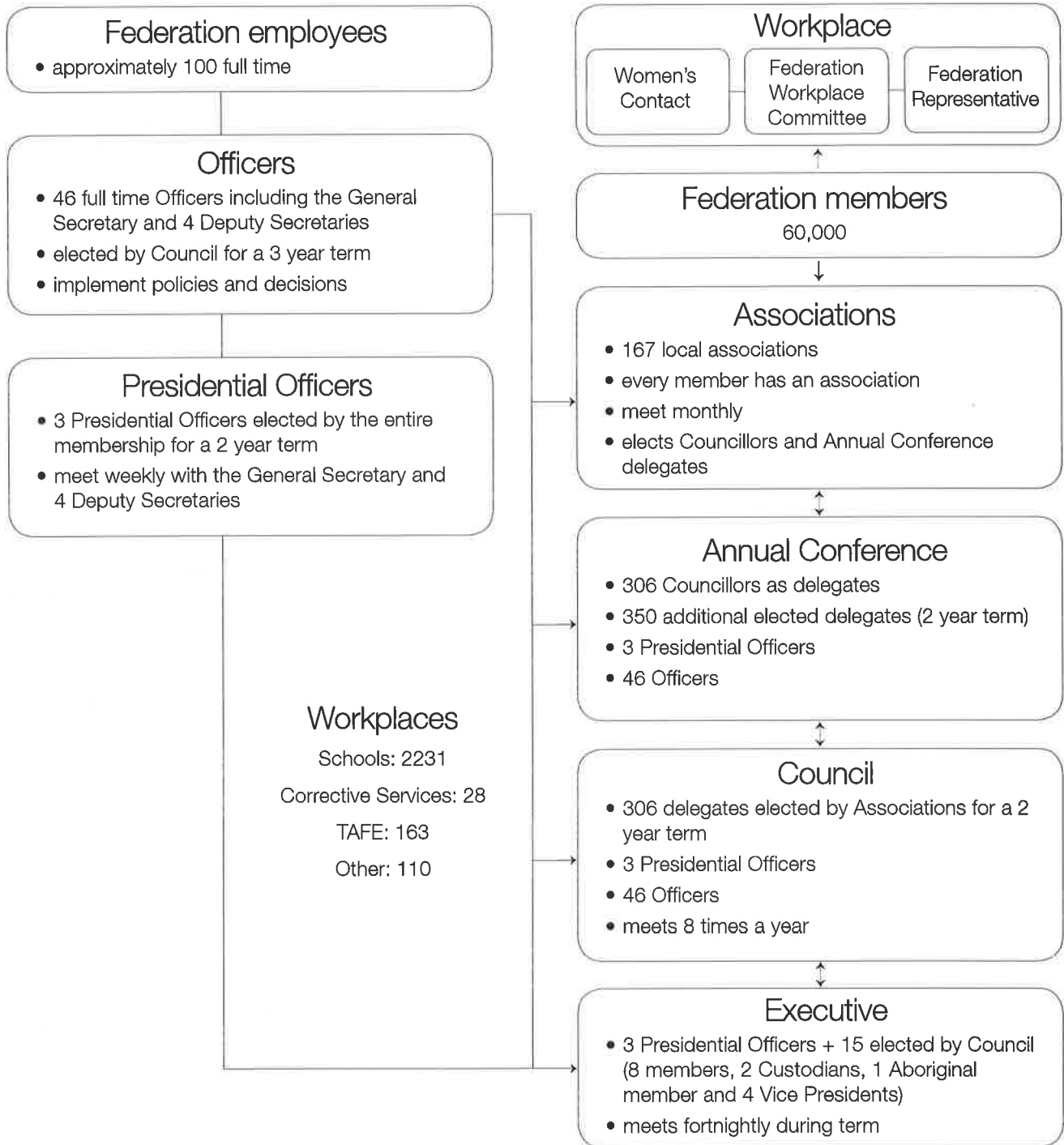
**Postal Address:** Locked Bag No. 3010 Darlinghurst NSW 1300



[www.nswtf.org.au](http://www.nswtf.org.au)



# Federation's Structure





# NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION Officers 2016–2018



There are 46 full time officers. The Presidential Officers are elected by the rank and file in a postal ballot and have a vote on Executive and Council.

Presidential Officers are elected for a two year period, currently 2016-2017.

<b>President</b>	Maurie Mulheron
<b>Deputy President</b>	Gary Zadkovich
<b>Senior Vice President</b>	Joan Lemaire

The other Officers are elected by the Council and do not vote at Executive or Council.

The following have been elected for 2016-2018. Except where noted all Officers are based at:

23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills 2010  
Telephone (02) 9217 2100  
Facsimile (02) 9217 2470

## **General Secretary**

John Dixon

## **Deputy Secretary (Communication and Administration)**

David Wynne

## **Deputy Secretary (Post Schools)**

Maxine Sharkey

## **Deputy Secretary (Industrial/Research and Professional Support)**

Rod Brown

## **Deputy Secretary (Schools)**

Michelle Rosicky

## **Aboriginal Education Coordinator**

Charline Emzin-Boyd

## **Communications Officer**

Cameron Malcher

## **Industrial/Research Officers**

Greg Butler, Jen Dive, Mary Fogarty, Lenore Hankinson

## **Membership and Training Officer**

Nicole Calnan

## **Multicultural Officer/Organiser**

Amber Flohm

## **Professional Support Officers**

Angela Catallo, Janet Hannaford, Kerry Johnson, Jenny Moes

## **TAFE Organisers**

Phil Chadwick, Rob Long, Kathy Nicholson

## **Trade Union Training** Mel Smith

## **Women's Coordinator** Anna Uren

## City Organisers

<b>Kate Ambrose</b>	Inner City, Inner West
<b>Theo Bougatsas</b>	Hornsby, Ryde-Macquarie, The Hills
<b>Michael de Wall</b>	Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Lower Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Nepean
<b>Jason Gerke</b>	Liverpool, Parramatta
<b>David Ferguson</b>	Manly-Warringah, Middle Harbour, OCAA
<b>Amber Flohm</b>	Fairfield
<b>Julie Moon</b>	Canterbury-Bankstown
<b>Henry Rajendra</b>	Camden-Campbelltown, St Marys-Mt Druitt
<b>Leeanda Smith</b>	Eastern Suburbs, St George
<b>Claudia Vera</b>	Picton, Sutherland

## Country Organisers

<b>Bathurst</b>	(02) 6331 5761	Kelly Anderson
<b>Dubbo</b>	(02) 6882 6978	Duncan McDonald
<b>Lismore</b>	(02) 6621 3623	Marty Wheatley
<b>Newcastle</b>	(02) 4920 9833	Jack Galvin Waight, Fionie Stavert, Debbie Westacott
<b>Port Macquarie</b>	(02) 6583 7244	Ian Watson
<b>Queanbeyan</b>	(02) 6297 8862	Waine Donovan
<b>Tamworth</b>	(02) 6766 9882	Susan Armstead
<b>Wagga Wagga</b>	(02) 6921 4227	Brett Bertalli, John Pratt
<b>Wollongong</b>	(02) 4228 4414	John Black