

Policy – Working with First Nations People and Communities

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1. RATIONALE

The ideal of a fair, just and equitable society based on unbiased interactions between individuals is an inextricable element of unionism. In acknowledging that many of the challenges faced by First Nations people and communities have their genesis in unfair and inequitable practices of colonisation, the union movement in general, and our union in particular, is confronted with the challenge of conceiving and enacting a course of action that supports and enables First Nations Peoples in their efforts to assert their own social and cultural values.

This course of action must, by definition, be consistent with a recognition that the cultures, histories and achievements of First Nations People are an integral and highly valued feature of the geographic and sociocultural landscape in which we all live and work.

Given our ethical and professional responsibility to positively influence the perceptions and behaviours of future generations, it is important that we have a clearly articulated policy to guide our interactions with First Nations members and their communities.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

In the course of our activities as a union, we interact with First Nations People in three distinct, but overlapping contexts:

- (i) As individual members of our union
- (ii) As teachers and support staff in schools
- (iii) As members of communities in which we are active.

This policy applies to our interactions in all contexts.

3. PURPOSE

Given the diversity of life and work circumstances of our First Nations members throughout Queensland and The Northern Territory, it is helpful for our union to have a set of general principles for interactions with First Nations members and their communities.

The aim of this policy is to serve as a point of reference for interactions, particularly where union staff or members have limited prior experience in working with First Nations People.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Respectful and constructive relationships between First Nations People and Australians from other cultural backgrounds require acknowledgement that many of the challenges faced by current generations have their genesis in unfair, unjust policies and practices of colonisation and repairing the psychological, social and economic damage arising from these policies and practices is a long-term undertaking.

For this reason, it is imperative that we actively engage with members and their communities in order to ensure an actualisation of their autonomy, rather than repeating the mistakes of colonisation.

To achieve this goal, the Yubbah Action Group believes our union must operate in ways that cultivate an authentic First Nations voice that can direct our undertakings into the future.

Consistent with this aim, this policy commits our union to the following actions:

- (i) Maintenance of an active Reconciliation Action Plan;
- (ii) Offering all First Nations members opportunities to engage with both our Yarning Circle and Yubbah Action Group, or to engage with our union in other ways, as suits their own needs and requirements;
- (iii) Providing all staff with regular Cultural Awareness training, delivered by First Nations providers;
- (iv) Developing strategic alliances with other ideologically compatible stakeholder groups;
- (v) Engaging, where possible, First Nations businesses and suppliers to provide our union with goods and services;
- (vi) Ensuring that those who provide our union with access to cultural knowledge are appropriately acknowledged, including – where appropriate – provision of financial remuneration.

5. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all operations, locations and offices of the IEUA-QNT.

6. DEFINITIONS

“Australian Standards” are, AS 8000-2003 Corporate Governance – Good governance principles, AS NZS ISO 31000-2009 Risk Management – Principles and guidelines and AS 3806-2006 Compliance Programs, or their successors.

7. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

The Branch Secretary has oversight of policy and should be consulted for interpretations, resolution of problems and special situations.

8. POLICY AUTHORITY

This Policy is authorised by the IEUA-QNT Branch Executive.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

None.

10. REVIEWED IN RELATION TO:

Reconciliation Action Plan	Yes
Anti-discrimination Regulation	Yes

11. REVISION HISTORY

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Branch Executive.

Revision	Date	Made By	Approved By	Reason
New	August 2020	Branch Secretary	Branch Executive	New Policy