

Special Authority for an Unregistered Person to Teach, First Nations Educator Policy

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**Teachers
Registration Board**
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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1 Objective

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, consistent, and transparent framework for the granting of Special Authorities to Teach (SATs) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators who do not hold teacher registration. This framework is designed to recognise and support the unique cultural knowledge, linguistic expertise, and community authority that these educators bring to South Australian schools and preschools.

This policy provides for the granting of SATs under two categories:

- **First Nations Languages and Culture**, which enables suitably endorsed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to teach Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures in a South School Australian schools and pre-schools; or
- **Anangu Bilingual Education**, which enables Aboriginal educators to support the delivery of bilingual education programs in schools located on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (the Anangu Lands), where the integration of first languages and English is essential to student learning, cultural continuity, and community engagement.

By establishing clear criteria and processes for the assessment and approval of SAT applications, this policy ensures that educators granted a SAT possess the necessary cultural authority, linguistic proficiency, and capability to undertake teaching responsibilities safely and effectively. It also ensures that decisions are made in a fair, accountable, and culturally respectful manner.

Through this policy, the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia (the Board) affirms its commitment to strengthening culturally responsive education, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the teaching workforce, and ensuring that students across South Australia benefit from high-quality language, cultural, and bilingual learning programs delivered by educators with recognised community authority and expertise.

2 Scope

This policy applies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons who do not hold teacher registration and who are seeking a SAT for the purpose of delivering Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages and culture programs, or for delivering bilingual education programs in schools located on the Anangu Lands.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the general principles set out in the Board's Special Authorities to Teach Policy. Where any inconsistency arises, the provisions of this policy take precedence.

3 Policy Statement

The Board acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first educators of this country, having sustained complex and sophisticated systems of knowledge transmission, cultural learning, and intergenerational teaching for tens of thousands of years. These educational traditions - rooted in deep relationships with land, language, kinship, and community - form the foundation of the oldest continuous cultures in the world. Recognising this enduring history is essential to understanding the significance and value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in contemporary education systems.

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The Board further acknowledges that the effective delivery of First Nations language and culture programs, as well as bilingual education on the Anangu Lands, requires the involvement of culturally authoritative educators who may not hold teacher registration. These educators bring essential linguistic knowledge, cultural expertise, and community-endorsed authority that cannot be replicated through conventional teacher preparation pathways. Their participation is critical to ensuring that teaching and learning in these contexts is authentic, culturally grounded, and aligned with community expectations.

Aboriginal educators contribute to the schooling system by bringing deep cultural knowledge, lived experience, and community authority into teaching and learning environments. Their understanding of local histories, languages, and cultural practices enriches curriculum delivery and ensures that Aboriginal perspectives are embedded in ways that are accurate, respectful, and meaningful. This strengthens the cultural responsiveness of schools and supports all students to develop a more informed understanding of Australia's First Nations peoples.

In addition, Aboriginal educators play a vital role in fostering culturally safe and supportive learning environments. Their presence helps build trust between schools, students, families, and communities, which is essential for improving engagement, attendance, and wellbeing. For Aboriginal children, being taught by educators who share their cultural identity promotes a strong sense of belonging, pride, and confidence - factors closely linked to positive educational outcomes and long-term participation in schooling.

Aboriginal educators also enhance the capability of the broader teaching workforce by contributing diverse perspectives, pedagogical approaches, and cultural insights, thereby strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities and ensuring that education in South Australia is inclusive, respectful, and reflective of the cultural heritage and aspirations of the First Peoples of this land.

4 Authorisation

Under section 30 of the *Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004* (the Act), the Board has the authority to grant a Special Authority to Teach (SAT) to an individual who is not currently registered as a teacher in South Australia. This authority may be issued for a specified period and may include any conditions the Board considers necessary to ensure the safety, competence, and suitability of the individual to undertake teaching duties. The provision enables the Board to respond flexibly to workforce needs while maintaining its statutory responsibility to uphold professional and child-safety standards.

This policy does not confer a right of grant to any applicant. In exercising its powers under section 30, the Board must be satisfied that granting a SAT is appropriate in the circumstances, that the applicant is a fit and proper person to work with children and young people, and that any conditions imposed will adequately mitigate risk and support high-quality teaching practice.

5 Eligibility Criteria

A SAT may be granted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people where it is demonstrated that they are suitable, competent, and fit to teach, and where all regulatory and policy requirements are satisfied.

The requirement for applicants of SATs meet the Board's English Language Proficiency standards does not apply under this policy.

5.1 First Nations Languages and Cultures

To be considered for a SAT in this category under this policy, an applicant must:

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- Hold a current Working With Children Check issued in South Australia and not be a prohibited person.
- Provide a relevant Overseas Criminal History Check if the applicant has lived outside Australia for 12 months or more (cumulatively) within the past 10 years, and was 18 years of age or older during that period.
- Consent to the conduct of a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check.
- Declare any current and previous disciplinary, criminal, or professional matters.
- Demonstrate that they are otherwise a fit and proper person.
- Demonstrate appropriate content knowledge of the subject area/s that they will be teaching. Applicants will meet this policy requirement by providing evidence that they meet one or more of the following:
 - Hold a Certificate III in Learning an Australian First Nation Language;
 - Hold Certificate IV in Teaching an Australian First Nations Language;
 - Currently undertaking an accredited or approved Initial Teacher Education program;
 - Have demonstrated experience in delivering First Nations languages and cultures in an education setting for a minimum period of 12 months in the preceding 5 years; and/or
 - Have been employed for a minimum of 12 months within the preceding 5 years as an Aboriginal Education Worker in a government school or preschool.
- Have written authorisation confirming that the applicant has both cultural authority and is proficient to teach the relevant First Nations language and culture from one or more of the following First Nations organisations:
 - an Aboriginal community-controlled language organisation registered by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations;
 - a Recognised Aboriginal Representative Body under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*;
 - a Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate recognised by South Australian Native Title Services or a member of the Council of Aboriginal Elders of South Australia;
 - a school or preschool language program advisory group with majority Aboriginal membership; or
 - for Anangu teaching in Anangu Lands schools only – the Anangu Director of Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC).

5.2 Anangu Bilingual education

To be considered for a SAT in this category under this policy, an applicant must:

- Hold a current Working With Children Check issued in South Australia and not be a prohibited person.
- Consent to the conduct of a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check.
- Provide a relevant Overseas Criminal History Check if the applicant has lived outside Australia for 12 months or more (cumulatively) within the past 10 years, and was 18 years of age or older during that period.
- Declare any current and previous disciplinary, criminal, or professional matters.

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- Demonstrate that they are otherwise a fit and proper person.
- Demonstrate appropriate content knowledge of the subject area/s that they will be teaching. Applicants will meet this policy requirement by providing evidence that they meet one of the following:
 - Hold a Diploma of Teaching (Anangu Education);
 - Hold a Bachelor of Teaching (Anangu Education); or
 - Have written authorisation from a panel established by the Department for Education (the Department) in conjunction with PYEC, confirming that the applicant has both cultural authority and ability to undertake the core duties of a teaching role.
- Evidence proof of an offer of employment by the Department to deliver Anangu Bilingual education.

6 Grant of SAT, conditions and limitations

6.1 Holders of a SAT may teach at multiple sites

A grant of a SAT under either category under this policy will not be restricted to a single education site, allowing the holder to teach across multiple locations.

However, in the case of a SAT granted for Anangu Bilingual Education, the authority is limited to teaching within schools located on the Anangu Lands, namely:

- Amata Anangu School
- Ernabella Anangu School
- Fregon Anangu School
- Indulkana Anangu School
- Kenmore Park Anangu School
- Mimili Anangu School
- Murputja Anangu School
- Oak Vally Anangu School
- Pipalyatjara Anangu School
- Yalata Anangu School

Holders of an Anangu Bilingual Education SAT are not authorised to teach in any other prescribed service and/or site in South Australia.

6.2 Holders of a SAT must not occupy positions of leadership

Any holder of a SAT granted under this policy must not occupy positions of leadership roles. This restriction applies to all positions that involve formal leadership responsibilities, including but not limited to acting principal, deputy principal, assistant principal, preschool director, or any other role that carries delegated management, supervisory, or decision-making authority.

6.3 Requirement to undertake professional learning

Holders of a SAT under this policy must complete a minimum of 20 hours of professional learning every 12 months, in accordance with the requirements set out in Attachment A to the Board's Special Authorities to Teach Policy.

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6.4 Duration of grant

A grant of a SAT under either category under this policy will remain valid for a period determined by the Board, not exceeding a maximum of 3 years.

6.5 Specific Requirement for holders of an Anangu Bilingual Education SAT holder to be under supervision of a registered teacher and have a mentor

Holders of an Anangu Bilingual Education SAT must:

- undergo proper and targeted induction, to be provided by the site leader and Anangu Coordinator;
- only deliver teaching instruction under supervision of a registered teacher; and
- be assigned a designated mentor, appointed by the site leader and Anangu Coordinator, who is responsible for providing guidance and professional support.

6.6 Board may vary or revoke grant

The Board may, by written notice to the holder of a SAT vary or revoke the authority at any time. This may be done without the requirement for a hearing or the undertaking of any additional procedural steps. The Board will exercise this power where it considers such action necessary to uphold legislative requirements, protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, or maintain the integrity of the teacher registration framework.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

The Board has endorsed and approved this policy. This approval signifies that the Board has considered the policy in accordance with its statutory functions and is satisfied that the policy supports the effective administration of SAT upholds legislative requirements, and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

It is noted that applications for SATs will be considered by the Registrar, in accordance with the delegations conferred by the Board pursuant to section 17 of the Act. The Registrar may, where appropriate, authorise the Board staff, including the Deputy Registrar and the Manager, Registration, to consider and determine applications for SATs. Any decisions made under such authorisations are taken to be decisions of the Registrar and are subject to the same legislative and procedural requirements.

8 References

- *Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004*
- *Teachers Registration and Standards Regulations 2021*
- TRB Special Authorities to Teach Policy
- AITSL's Australian Professional Standards for Teachers:
 - Focus Area 1.4: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students
 - Focus Area 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians