

## VICTORIA UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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| <b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>  | <b>POU050310000</b>                               |
| <b>POLICY NAME:</b>    | <b>Acknowledgement Policy</b>                     |
| <b>DATE APPROVED:</b>  | <b>25 March 2005</b>                              |
| <b>POLICY OWNER:</b>   | <b>Principal officer responsible for Students</b> |
| <b>POLICY ADVISOR:</b> | <b>Director, Moondani Balluk</b>                  |

### 1.0 PURPOSE

To acknowledge the original custodians of the land on which the University stands.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

At the Council meeting of 1 October 2001, Council approved the Reconciliation Statement and Acknowledgment of Country outlined below and their release to the University Community.

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

Acknowledgement – acknowledgement of the original custodians.

### 4.0 KEY WORDS

Acknowledgement of country; Reconciliation; Wurundjeri, Kulin nation.

### 5.0 POLICY

#### RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Victoria University (VU) reaffirms its commitment to maintaining a culturally diverse, tolerant and open institution, united by an overriding commitment to excellence in education and the value of academia and knowledge systems.

Victoria University acknowledges and recognises:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia.
- The Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of university land.

- The loss and grief held by Aboriginal Australians caused by alienation from traditional lands, loss of lives and freedoms, and the forced removal of children.
- The rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own beliefs, values and customs and the importance of their contribution to strengthening and enriching the heritage of all Australians.
- The need for equal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of addressing the needs of communities.
- That ignorance, apathy, resistance and opposition still exists about reconciliation and the need to overcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage.
- That through understanding the spiritual relationship between the land and its first peoples, we share our future and take the steps towards living in harmony

Victoria University supports:

- The vision as expressed by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation of a "united Australia which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all".
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together for a "treaty" or other instrument of continuing reconciliation.
- The need for educational systems to be culturally appropriate to enable better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to ensure equality of opportunity with other Australians.
- The need to improve non-Indigenous understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and find ways to continue our work together in partnership to ensure the principles of equity and access for all members of the Indigenous community to culturally appropriate services and educational programs.

Victoria University commits to:

- The adoption of appropriate Aboriginal protocols at public meetings, the first yearly meetings of Council, the Board of TAFE, Academic Board and Vocational Education Board of an agreed "acknowledgment of country".
- The provision of appropriate and agreed symbols of reconciliation across campuses.
- The provision of curricula to improve awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures, rights and status that includes Indigenous perspectives and addresses racism.
- The establishment of strategies for employing and training more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The establishment of an Indigenous Research protocol and the investigation of requirements of Indigenous intellectual property and cultural rights as relevant to the institutions educational operations.
- Subject to viability, the continuing delivery of the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education (Nyerna Studies) program.
- Targeting programs through the TAFE sector for employment opportunities in the local labour market so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to compete for available jobs or business opportunities.
- Actively encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to equip themselves with the skills, knowledge and experiences that are valued in the local employment market.

## **6.0 PROCEDURES**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Acknowledgment of Country is a ceremony undertaken by non-Koori people that recognises and respects traditional owners of land, undertakes part of the University's Reconciliation Statement and promotes greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The University's Reconciliation Statement asks that VU commit to the adoption of agreed protocols where a formal Acknowledgment of Country is utilised at VU conferences, public meetings and events, and the first yearly meetings of Council, Board of TAFE, Academic Board, and Vocational Education Board.

- **Formal Acknowledgment**

"We acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the Boorwurrung and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation who were the custodians of University land for many centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet was the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's living culture had and has a unique role in the life of this region."

- **Informal Acknowledgement**

"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Boorwurrung and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation and we pay respect to their Elders and families."

In instances where the delivery of the Acknowledgment of Country was on University land that involved different tribal groups, the Acknowledgment of Council should be modified to recognise these groups.

The Council also approved the use of stoles or sashes (as appropriate) in either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander colours, to be worn by Koori students at graduation in conjunction with their graduation gowns.

## **7.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES**

Aboriginal Education Policy for students  
Access & Equity for Students  
Elimination of Racism Policy  
Social Justice policy

## **8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Koori Development & Support Unit  
Senior Management Group  
Council in deliberations in 2000 and 2001

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## **9.0 CONSULTATION**

Academic Board minute 113.6.3 refers to Academic colours; academic board minute 114.8.1.1 refers to the Reconciliation statement.

## **10.0 REVIEW**

December 2007

## **11.0 ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### **11.1 RESPONSIBILITY**

Chairs of Statutory boards and committees.

### **11.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Information about the utilization of the Reconciliation Statement was disseminated by Professor Falk in 2001.

### **11.3 TRAINING PLAN**

NA

### **11.4 COMPLIANCE**

Evidence of the Statement in Council documentation.

### **11.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY**

To be judged within the review process.

## **12.0 FORMS**

NA

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## **13.0 APPENDICES**

NA