



Australian Government

# Be That Teacher Campaign

→ First Nations Stakeholder Toolkit

**BE  
THAT  
TEACHER**



# Introduction

Teachers play an important role in our communities – many of us remember the teachers that helped us to learn and grow, who created safe spaces or supported us through school. It's not just about academics; it's about acknowledging, preserving and celebrating cultural identity, nurturing leadership, and building a strong foundation for the future.

The *Be That Teacher* campaign, shares stories from teachers right across Australia. We recognise and celebrate the important role that First Nations teachers play in inspiring the next generation of leaders in our diverse communities.

**In this kit, you'll find some tools to help you share stories from First Nations teachers:**

- *Connections* artwork
- Teacher stories
- Pathways to becoming a teacher
- Resources
  - Posters
  - Newsletter content
  - Social media
  - Video stories



## Connections artwork

The artwork featured in the Be That Teacher campaign is titled *Connections* by Michaela Jeffries, a Wiradjuri and Ngemba woman, artist, and pre-service teacher based on Wiradjuri Country in regional NSW. Michaela is passionate about contributing to better outcomes for First Nations students through equitable access to quality education and learning.

### Artist story

Michaela draws on her experience of becoming a professional teacher to create the bespoke campaign artwork.

She reflects on her experience of walking in two worlds, and how the support of an intuitive teacher can guide this path for a fulfilling and positive future.

At the centre of the artwork, we see teacher and student relationships illustrated through the large and smaller circles. Michaela reflects on the importance of a reciprocal relationship, as everyone has knowledge and perspectives to share, and as a First Nations teacher, she sees this as her strength.

Finding a shared path, the teacher is equal to the student, and the student equal to the teacher. This continuous respect is a

unique First Nations perspective and echoed in the layers of circles. Learning is continuous and never-ending, like the circle.

Surrounding the large and smaller circles, are the connections and experiences that are shared between student and teacher, joining them on their journeys.

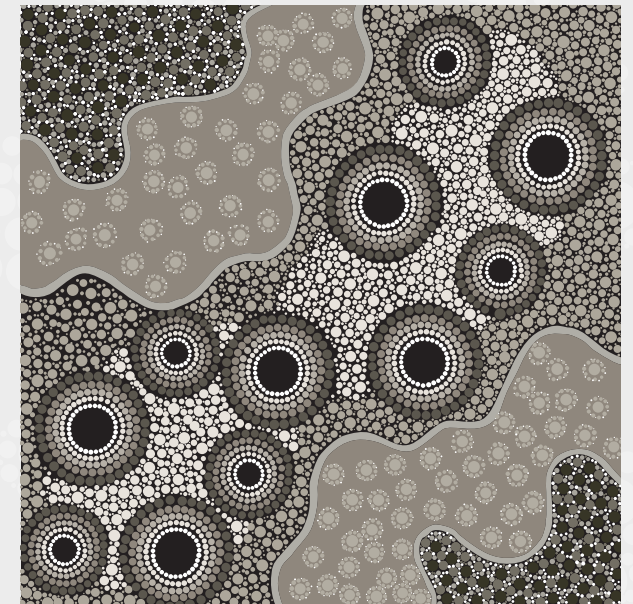
The next outer layer represents cultural knowledge and ways of being. The unique perspective of being connected to Country, our history and experiences. Our laws of kinship, our trading practices and cultural values give us strength and experience to draw from.

Our final layer, on the top left and lower right corners is the most powerful knowledge. The complex cultural knowledge that runs deeper and vaster than we know. This is the experience of our Elders, passed between generations, and through time. We draw on our verbal history, stories and knowledge that have been shared through millennia, and live on in Country. A running river, a current of knowledge that supports us on our learning and teaching journey.

Reflected in Michaela's colour palette is the 'Koori Rainbow'. Michaela invokes the 'cuppa tea' analogy. No matter the shade of our complexion, we are always connected to First Nations cultural ways and knowledge and draw on this strength throughout our educational journey.

**“We are always connected to First Nations cultural ways and knowledge and draw on this strength throughout our educational journey.”**

**Michaela Jeffries, Wiradjuri and Ngemba woman**



Michaela Jeffries  
*Connections, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas



## Teacher stories



### Joseph Collinson

Joseph, a Kungarakan man from Darwin NT, shares his story about how teaching has made an impact on both him and his students, encouraging other young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to consider a rewarding career as a teacher.

**“Being a role model is something I’m very proud of.”**  
Joseph Collinson, Kungarakan man

[→ Click here to see Joseph’s story](#)



### Barran (Aunty) Fiona and Barran (Aunty) Alanah

Many First Nations teachers are also cultural ambassadors who create opportunities for students and peers to connect to culture and Country. We spoke to Gumbaynggirr and Bundjalung woman Fiona and Gomerioi woman Alanah, both teachers on Gumbaynggirr Country in Coffs Harbour, about what teaching on Country means to them.

**“To any mob wanting to become a teacher, we need you. Our kids need you. Our Ancestors need you.”**  
Barran (Aunty) Alanah, Gomerioi woman

[→ Click here to see Barran \(Aunty\) Fiona and Barran \(Aunty\) Alanah’s stories](#)





# Teacher stories



## Cedella Anson

Cedella Anson, proud Erub neur (woman) from Danley Island, teaches secondary students on Thursday Island. Cedella found her passion for teaching after witnessing the impact her Aunt, who taught at various schools across remote North Queensland communities had on her students.

“I used to see all the students always say hi to her, even after school, and I felt really inspired by that because she had made a real impact for them. After I had my first child, I thought, I need to get into education because I want to make a difference for him.”

Cedella says she really enjoyed studying teaching at university and was motivated to finish her degree and make her family proud.

**“Just as my Aunt was the first in her family to get a degree, I am now the first in my family to do the same.” Cedella, Erub neur (woman)**

→ [Click here to read more inspiring stories on the Be That Teacher website](#)



## Kylie Captain

Born and raised on Gadigal Country, Gamilaroi woman Kylie Captain’s journey is an inspiring testament to the power of education and the impact a teacher can have on a student’s life.

Kylie reflects on the pivotal role played by Ms Cathie Burgess (now Dr Cathie Burgess), her year 11 and 12 Aboriginal Studies teacher who saw her potential during a critical moment in her life, soon becoming a catalyst for change. Kylie went on to complete a Bachelor of Education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Teaching, earning a place on the Dean’s merit list over several years.

Kylie now uses her experience to empower teachers and students across the country through programs and courses that fully capture how to Be That Teacher for all students.

**“I often say that I live a life of freedom and choice thanks to the difference a teacher made on me, and the opportunities education has provided me.” Kylie Captain, Gamilaroi woman**

→ [Click here to read more inspiring stories on the Be That Teacher website](#)



# Pathways to becoming a teacher

**There is more than one pathway to becoming a teacher.**

Information on pathways to studying teaching, comparing courses, scholarships and financial support can be found at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/become-teacher](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/become-teacher).

There is also a downloadable factsheet you can share with people who are considering becoming a teacher.

→ Click here to download the 'Pathways to becoming a teacher' factsheet

→ Click here to download the 'Pathways to becoming a teacher' social tile

**Pathways to becoming a teacher**

Find and compare pathways towards a future career in teaching at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/become-teacher](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/become-teacher)

→ BeThatTeacher.gov.au

**Post copy:**

There is more than one pathway to becoming a teacher. Find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/become-teacher](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/become-teacher) #BeThatTeacher



## Pathways to becoming a teacher

**There is more than one pathway to becoming a teacher.**

The first step for many is studying teaching as an undergraduate university degree. Many universities and TAFE institutions also have Indigenous student support services. You can enquire during the enrolment period.

**Find and compare courses at:**

- Education and Training provides information and advice to help plan your teaching career, no matter your age or circumstances.
- CourseSeeker helps you find the course that is right for you. Course Seeker also includes information on financial assistance and applying for courses.
- CompareED compares institutions and study areas based on real life student experiences.

**Other pathways towards a future career in teaching:**

- TAFE can help you gain entrance qualifications towards a university pathway and help you prepare for a university degree.
- Studying a post graduate qualification in addition to your undergraduate degree.
- The Australian Government High Achieving Teachers Program supports two alternative, employment-based pathways into teaching for high achieving individuals committed to pursuing a career in teaching.



→ [BeThatTeacher.gov.au](http://BeThatTeacher.gov.au)





# Resources

## Posters

You can print these and put them up on community noticeboards, staff meeting rooms and reception areas to celebrate and share teachers' stories with your community.

[→ Click here to download the posters](#)

Australian Government  
A joint Australian, state and territory government initiative.

“  
Being that role model and leader is something I am very proud of.  
”

Mr Collinson  
Kungarakan  
Year 5 & 6  
Teacher, NT

See the story

There's nothing quite like the feeling of helping somebody else succeed. The question is, who will you inspire?

→ BeThatTeacher.gov.au

**BE THAT TEACHER**

Australian Government  
A joint Australian, state and territory government initiative.

“  
Teaching just gives you a purpose, and not every job does that.  
”

Barran (Aunty) Alanah  
Gomeri  
Teacher and  
Principal, NSW

See the story

There's nothing quite like the feeling of helping somebody else succeed. The question is, who will you inspire?

→ BeThatTeacher.gov.au

**BE THAT TEACHER**





## Resources

# Newsletter content

Use the below newsletter content to promote the Be That Teacher campaign in your community!

### ***Be That Teacher* campaign promotes the role of teachers in communities**

The Be That Teacher campaign, shares stories from teachers right across Australia, recognising and celebrating the important role that they play in inspiring the next generation of leaders in our diverse communities. There are a range of First Nations teachers' stories included in the campaign, helping to shine a light on pathways into a rewarding career as a teacher. Check out the video stories at [bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](https://bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations). You can also submit your own teacher story via the online gallery and find information about pathways into a career in teaching.





# Resources

## Social media posts

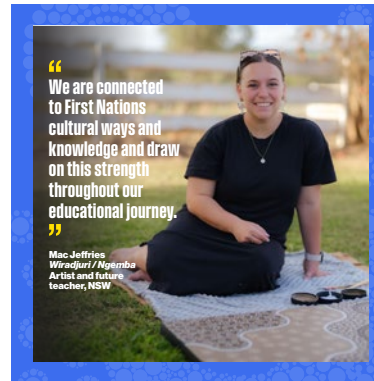
You can use these social media tiles and suggested post copy to share First Nations teachers' stories in your communities and across your networks.

→ [Click here to download the social tiles](#)



### Social Tile

### Post copy



Mac Jeffries is a proud Wiradjuri and Ngemba woman, pre-service teacher and artist. Mac created the artwork for the Be That Teacher campaign, highlighting the importance of First Nations cultural ways and knowledge in education! Find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations) #BeThatTeacher



Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr woman Barran (Aunty) Fiona is a teacher at Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School. She shares what inspires her as part of the Be That Teacher campaign. Find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations) #BeThatTeacher



Gomeri woman and teacher Barran (Aunty) Alanah is encouraging more mob to consider becoming a teacher, as part of the Be That Teacher campaign. Find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations) #BeThatTeacher



# Resources

## Social media posts

You can use these social media tiles and suggested post copy to share First Nations teachers' stories in your communities and across your networks.

→ [Click here to download the social tiles](#)

### Social Tile



### Post copy

Kylie Captain is a Gamilaroi woman, and passionate advocate for First Nations education. She shares her experiences of being that teacher, and why it's important to celebrate the role that First Nations teachers play in students lives. Find more teacher stories at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations) #BeThatTeacher



Cedella is a proud Erub neur (woman) from Danley Island, teaching secondary students on Thursday Island. After starting out in nursing, Cedella found her passion for teaching after witnessing the impact her Aunt, who was also a teacher, had on the students that she taught. Cedella shares her story as part of the Be That Teacher campaign, find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations), #BeThatTeacher



Joseph is a teacher on Larrakia Country in Darwin and was inspired to pursue a teaching career by his sister, who is also a teacher within their community. He reflects on what being that teacher means to him in the Be That Teacher campaign. See Joseph's story at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations), #BeThatTeacher

# Resources

## Social media posts

You can use these social media tiles and suggested post copy to share First Nations teachers' stories in your communities and across your networks.

→ [Click here to download the social tiles](#)



### Social Tile

### Post copy



The Be That Teacher campaign shines a light on the important role teachers play in our communities. Encourage teachers in your local community to share their story via the online teacher gallery at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au), and help inspire the next generation of educators! #BeThatTeacher



Know someone that would make a deadly teacher? The Be That Teacher campaign provides resources and stories that shine a light on the important role of teachers in our communities. Find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations), #BeThatTeacher



The Be That Teacher campaign shines a light on the important role teachers play in our communities. Encourage teachers in your community to share their story via the online teacher gallery at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au), and help inspire the next generation of educators! #BeThatTeacher



# Resources

## Video stories

Share these video stories across your social media accounts with the hashtag **#BeThatTeacher**

- Video advertisement 60 and 30 seconds – Mr Collinson
- Connecting to language, culture and Country, teaching in Coffs Harbour
- 'Connections' by artist and teacher Michaela Jeffries

→ [Click here to download the videos](#)



### Video

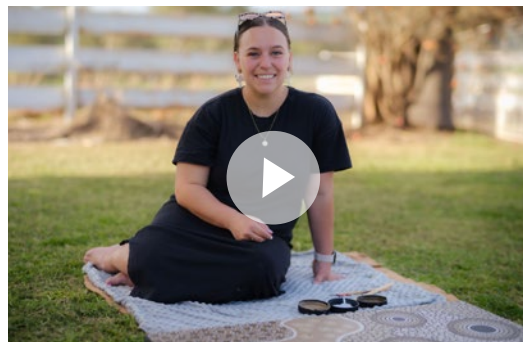


### Post copy

Joseph is a teacher on Larrakia Country in Darwin and was inspired to pursue a teaching career by his sister, who is also a teacher within their community. He reflects on what being that teacher means to him in the Be That Teacher campaign. See Joseph's story at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations), #BeThatTeacher



Many First Nations teachers are also cultural ambassadors who create opportunities for students and peers to connect to culture and Country. Watch Gumbaynggirr and Bundjalung woman Barran (Aunty) Fiona and Gomerioi woman, teacher and principal Barran (Aunty) Alanah encourage more mob to consider a career in teaching as part of the 'Be That Teacher' campaign. Find out more at [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations), #BeThatTeacher



Mac Jeffries is a Wiradjuri and Ngemba woman, artist, and pre-service teacher based on Wiradjuri Country in regional NSW. Mac is passionate about contributing to better outcomes for First Nations students through equitable access to quality education and learning. In this video, Mac shares her story and artwork 'Connections' featured in the Be That Teacher campaign. [www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations](http://www.bethatteacher.gov.au/first-nations), #BeThatTeacher



**Thank you**

For your collaboration on this important initiative. If you have any questions or require further campaign resources, please email us at [BeThatTeacher@education.gov.au](mailto:BeThatTeacher@education.gov.au)