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## **AIPA Welcomes Historic Cultural Safety Standard in National Psychology Education Accreditation**

The Australian Indigenous Psychology Association (AIPA) welcomes the updated [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council \(APAC\) Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs](#), set to be implemented from 1 December 2025.

In 2019, APAC introduced “[Criterion 3.8 Cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, is appropriately integrated within the program and clearly articulated as a required learning outcome](#).” This standard was the direct result of decades leadership and advocacy by Indigenous leaders such as Professor Pat Dudgeon, [Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association \(AIPA\)](#), and the [Australia Indigenous Psychology Education Project \(AIPEP\)](#).

Over the last 6 years Criterion 3.8 has supported decolonising initiatives in psychology education across the nation. Building on the success of the 2019 standards, APAC has expanded and strengthened the regulatory commitment to cultural safety when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Domain 6, Cultural Safety, states: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to work, learn, engage, and receive services in culturally safe environments free from racism.”

This is a landmark reform that strengthens accountability across psychology education and training and signals a significant shift in what is expected of universities and education providers nationally.

As part of its comprehensive review, the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) has released updated standards that strengthen cultural responsiveness and cultural safety within psychology programs.

**Professor Pat Dudgeon** said the inclusion of specific cultural safety requirements marks a turning point for the profession, “This is a recognition that cultural safety is not optional, it is essential to ethical, culturally safe psychological practice in this country.”

“For the first time, the accreditation standards clearly state that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledge systems and leadership must be embedded in psychology education,” Professor Pat Dudgeon said.

The updated Accreditation Standards have been approved by the Psychology Board of Australia and are published in accordance with section 47(6) of the Ahpra National Law regarding cultural safety. The updated Accreditation Standards are in alignment with the new Psychology Board of Australia [Professional Competencies and Code of Conduct](#), which also took effect 1 December 2025.

AIPA recognises this as a landmark step toward ensuring psychology programs across Australia embed cultural values and ensure programs are culturally responsive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander students, while also lifting expectations for culturally safe practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

The new accreditation standards support AIPA's ongoing work to help build a culturally trained psychology workforce that responds with care and delivers equitable services to community. They also reinforce what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists have consistently advocated for: that cultural safety must be embedded in the foundations of training and professional capability—not treated as optional content.

**Vanessa Edwige** said the new standards place a clear responsibility on education providers to move beyond symbolic commitments and minimal program changes.

"Universities and training providers must demonstrate real, measurable action, and not just good intentions."

"This is about accountability, ensuring graduates are prepared to provide culturally safe services and actively challenge racism wherever they practise," Ms Edwige said.

**Professor Dudgeon** said the broader impact is clear.

"When accreditation standards embed cultural safety, they help change the culture of training and, over time, that changes the quality and safety of services people receive."

AIPA also recognises the significance of these reforms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students—by strengthening expectations that learning environments, supports, and systems will enable students to participate, progress, and succeed.

**Vanessa Edwige** added that the standards also support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students and the growth of the Indigenous psychology workforce.

"[These standards] don't just speak to curriculum, it speaks to belonging, safety, retention, and success for our students."

"It signals that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a rightful place in psychology to lead, teach, research and shape the future of the profession," Ms Edwige said.

**Belle Selkirk** said the standards provide a long-awaited framework for change across the training pipeline.

"The former [criterion 3.8 \[cultural responsiveness\]](#) was an important driver in system change. However, we can do better and go further in embedding cultural safety in psychology education and training."

"The new Domain 6 set out what cultural safety must look like in practice through learning outcomes, governance, and placements, and it strengthens expectations that higher education providers will be guided by Indigenous leadership," Ms Selkirk said.

This reform is critical for psychology programs graduate practitioners, who are equipped to work in culturally safe and accountable ways are grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise.

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Find out more:

[Australian Indigenous Psychology Association.](#)

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