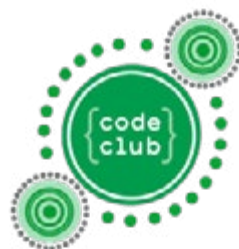


Code Club Australia and INDIGI LAB

A human rights based approach to developing a First Nations cultural framework

Discussion paper (August 2021)



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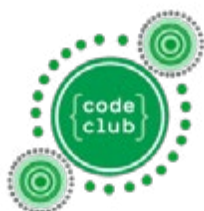
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Tess Reading is a proud Gomeroi woman, mother of three beautiful children and artist from Tamworth, NSW. An established graphic designer and photographer around Northwest NSW, for more than 10 years Tess has studied in the media and graphic design fields. Tess is passionate about using art to share stories and incorporating new ways to share knowledge from acrylic painting to animation. Tess designed the Code Club Australia logo used in this document and also worked with Code Club Australia to develop the Dhinawan in the sky coding project.

Acknowledgement from Telstra Foundation

Telstra Foundation acknowledges the First Nations Peoples of the Land, and we pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other First Nations people this document may come across. We also acknowledge the existing work by First Nations individuals, communities, organisations and government agencies that have contributed to developing protocols and building relationships to advance digital excellence of First Nations people, including coding skills for young people.

Overview

Telstra Foundation has commissioned Luke Briscoe, Founder and CEO INDIGI LAB to develop a First Nations Cultural Framework for Code Club Australia. Code Club Australia is powered by the Telstra Foundation and is the Foundation's key digital inclusion program to get kids coding.

The Foundation is looking to create new Code Club Australia teacher lesson plans and code projects, including content developed in collaboration with First Nations people. Core to this work is developing a First Nations Cultural Framework to guide this work.

More information about Code Club Australia can be found [here](#) and a sample lesson plan and project [here](#). All coding lesson plans and coding projects are accessible to Code Club volunteers, teachers and librarians via the [Code Club Australia website](#).

Aim

The aims of this discussion paper and consultative process are to:

- Identify culturally appropriate ways to engage with First Nations Peoples to co-develop Code Club Australia coding lessons for volunteers, teachers and librarians running code clubs.
- Align the discussion topics with the Foundational Principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to ensure Indigenous Rights are front and centre in the development of The First Nations Cultural Framework.
- Establish deeper relationships with First Nations peoples, businesses and communities interested in the mission to get kids coding

Approach

INDIGI LAB will take a three stage approach.

Stage 1 Key stakeholders are invited to participate in a survey and consider the ideas and aspirations in the discussion paper and provide input into the development of a First Nations Cultural Framework. The discussion and survey responses will inform common themes and important insights to shape The First Nations Cultural Framework, including First Nations current perspectives.

Stage 2 Key stakeholders will be engaged in online interviews to gather deeper insights on some of the critical issues for First Nations Peoples in STEM education and provide further input into the development of The First Nations Cultural Framework by discussing the themes, methods and approaches.

Stage 3 Stakeholder Feedback on the Draft First Nations Cultural Framework.

Note: discussion topics align with the Foundational Principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to ensure Indigenous Rights are front and centre in the development of The First Nations Cultural Framework. The UNDRIP is a globally recognised international human rights instrument which affirms the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, security and well-being of Indigenous peoples worldwide.

Who will use The Framework?

The Framework is intended for use by Telstra Foundation and will be accessible to all interested parties including government agencies and the broader STEM sector. Specifically, Telstra Foundation will use the framework to develop new Code Club Australia teacher resources such as curriculum aligned lesson plans and coding projects in partnership with First Nations peoples. The framework once finalised, will be shared to inform the broader STEM sector to apply a human rights based approach to developing initiatives that impact First Nations people of Australia.

First Nations Representation in STEM

Recent reports indicate that while certain sectors of youth in Australia are taking up STEM education, First Nations peoples are underrepresented in STEM education and the STEM sector more generally. More needs to be done to ensure the STEM sector develop culturally relevant First Nations STEM resources. It is vitally important to identify linkages across the STEM sectors to ensure that cultural protocols are maintained and projected in relation to traditional knowledge.

The following provides a snapshot of the critical issues facing First Nations peoples participating in STEM:

- In 2018, the attendance rate was 22–23 percentage points lower for First Nations students in very remote areas (63%) compared with Inner regional areas (86%) and Major cities (85%) (ACARA 2018a).
- The impact of remoteness was also evident for First Nations attendance levels (attending 90% or more of the time).
- In Inner regional areas, 55% of students were attending at this level, however this fell to 21% in very remote areas (ACARA 2018b).
- An estimated 2000 First Nations youth are graduating from high school each year.
- 43% of First Nations students graduate from high school with one STEM subject
- A small percentage of First Nations youth move into STEM learning pathways.
- 0.5 of a percent of First Nations students obtain an IT degree.
- Data from the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that in 2009 First Nations 15-year-old students were still underperforming compared to non-Indigenous students, with only 37.8% of First Nations students, compared to 68.5% of non-Indigenous students, reaching the accepted level of proficiency in science literacy.¹

First Nations youth have a unique contribution to make to Australian society. They can provide unique and diverse insights into science that western science cannot provide.

Furthermore, youth represent 35% of the total population of First Nations peoples of Australia and are our emerging future leaders – it is therefore essential that youth are involved in developing policies and strategies that ultimately impact on their futures.

¹ Indigenous Education and Skills Report, 2019, Site accessed 06/04/2021: Indigenous education and skills - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)

The Discussion Topics

The following four topics form the basis of discussion for developing a First Nations Cultural Framework.

1. Self-Determination

Self-determination is the central right of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). All other rights support First Nations' exercise of self-determination. At its core, self-determination 'is concerned with the fundamental right of people to shape their own lives'. In a practical sense, self-determination means that we have the freedom to live well, to determine what it means to live well according to our own values and beliefs. In recognising that First Nations peoples have this right, governments are required to recognise our collective/group identities such as our nations, language groups, clans, family alliances or communities.²

Key questions to consider:

1. What can Code Club Australia do to ensure First Nations communities have choice in determining the governance and outcomes of future Code Club Australia online lesson plans accessible by teachers and librarians.
2. What First Nations' knowledge would you like to see reflected in Code Club lesson plans (assuming lessons are developed in line with The First Nations Cultural Framework to ensure cultural protocols and safety considerations)
3. Do you think Code Club Australia lesson plans could do more to recognise collective group identities such as nations, language groups, clans, family alliances or communities?
4. What does self-determination mean to you? And how would it apply to developing First Nations' lesson plans in schools and libraries sector?
5. Any further comments and/or suggestions?

2. Participation in Decision-Making

First Nations peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which affect their rights, through representatives they chose. As part of this, First Nations peoples have a right to maintain and develop our own decision-making institutions. In order to ensure effective participation in decision-making, three key elements must be met: the duty to consult; free, prior and informed consent; and good faith.³

Telstra Foundation is committed to ensuring that First Nations peoples (including Elders, community representatives, First Nations STEM & educational experts) are the decision makers in the development of Code Club lesson plans that directly impact First Nations peoples.

Key questions to consider:

1. What should Code Club Australia do to ensure the methodology and approach of the Framework aligns to the three-key elements of decision making?
2. What does good faith mean to you if applying the term as a way of applying good faith in a project?
3. What are some successful examples of a human rights-based approach to developing First Nations STEM curriculum?
4. What type of structures need to be in place to apply culturally appropriate decision-making process for the First Nations Cultural Framework?
5. When developing lesson plans, what considerations do you think are critical to be included in The First Nations Cultural Framework?
6. Any further comments and/or suggestions?

² The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle One - Self-determination, 2018, Site accessed on the 03/06/2021: Self-determination | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (humanrights.gov.au)

³ The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle Two - Participation in Decision-making, 2018, Site accessed on the 03/06/2021: Participation in decision making | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (humanrights.gov.au)

3. Respect for and Protection of Culture

The UNDRIP asserts our rights to respect and protect language, culture and spiritual identity. This includes right to revitalise, use, develop and pass on to future generations our: ways of being and knowing; histories and our oral traditions; languages and ways of communicating; ways of thinking about the world; and names for communities, people and place.⁴

Code Club Australia is committed to ensuring lesson plans and projects are respectful to First Nations Peoples and Traditional Knowledge (TK) and we will ensure Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights are protected and maintained through our Code Club curriculum.

4. Non-Discrimination and Equality

First Nations peoples and individuals are entitled to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms recognised in international law, and the right to be free from discrimination in exercising these rights.

We believe all humans should have the same opportunities and no person should suffer discrimination on the bases of their race, religion, and gender.

Key questions to consider:

1. What should Code Club Australia do to ensure the First Nations Cultural Framework respects and protects Culture?
2. What key cultural indicators should Code Club Australia use to measure its impact on First Nations communities it engages with?
3. What are some successful examples of community driven First Nations STEM projects and initiatives?
4. What sensitivities should we be aware of in the development of The First Nations Cultural Framework?
5. Any further comments and/or suggestions?

Key questions to consider:

1. What should Code Club Australia do to ensure our coding lesson plans for teachers and librarians are equal for all? (Note Code Club volunteers teach coding fundamentals such as Scratch, Python and HTML code to 8-15 yo in Australia for free)
2. What can Code Club Australia do to play a role in educating the broader STEM sector about the importance of two-way learning?
3. Should Code Club Australia play a role in showcasing successful First Nations people working in technology careers to students across Australia, as part of its virtual offer? What could that look like?
4. What could Code Club Australia do to encourage teachers working in schools with higher numbers of First Nations students to start a code club in their school to offer free coding lessons?
5. Any further comments and/or suggestions?

⁴ The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle Three– Respect for and Protection of Culture, 2018, Site accessed on the 03/06/2021: [Respect for and protection of culture | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(humanrights.gov.au\)](#)

⁵ The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle Four – Non-Discrimination and Equity, 2018, Site accessed on the 03/06/2021: [Non-discrimination and equality | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(humanrights.gov.au\)](#)

Seeking Your Views

First Nations STEM educators, academics, cultural educators, scientists, and technologists are encouraged to participate in the public consultations.

Consultations will occur between August and October 2021. Targeted discussions with key stakeholders will also occur during this time.

Information on making submissions — including an on-line survey — is available at:

Website: www.surveymonkey.com/r/codeclubau

Your comments on this discussion paper will assist in enabling human rights-based approach to developing the Code Club Australia First Nations Cultural Framework.

For further information, please contact:



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Reference List

1. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Guidelines, 2007, Site accessed 01/06/2021: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
2. Indigenous Education and Skills Report, 2019, Site accessed 06/04/2021: Indigenous education and skills - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)
3. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle One - Self-determination, 2018, Site accessed 03/06/2021: Self-determination | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (humanrights.gov.au)
4. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle Two - Participation in Decision-making, 2018, Site accessed 03/06/2021: Participation in decision making | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (humanrights.gov.au)
5. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Foundational Principle Three— Respect for and Protection of Culture, 2018, Site accessed on the 03/06/2021: Respect for and protection of culture | Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (humanrights.gov.au)
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