



# **BELONGING** **FRAMEWORK**

“Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard”


LIZ FOSSLIN & MOLLY WEST DUFFY, CO-AUTHORS OF NO HARD FEELINGS:  
THE SECRET POWER OF EMBRACING EMOTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE



**WODONGATAFE**



**EQUITY, RESPECT,  
DIVERSITY,  
COLLABORATION,  
ACCOUNTABILITY**



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**Keep up to date with our  
Belonging Framework.**

Wodonga TAFE RTO: 3097  
Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this publication are accurate at the time of printing, January 2022. Contents may be subject to change without notice.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which Wodonga TAFE operates.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, who give us strength, inspiration and guidance to deliver great training outcomes for our communities.

Please see [Wodonga TAFE Reflect – Reconciliation Action Plan](#)

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

At Wodonga TAFE, we actively support an inclusive culture where people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, gender, age and abilities are respected and celebrated. We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for staff, students, and the broader community.

We strive to be a place where all people feel they are celebrated and their unique perspectives are valued. I am proud to be releasing our Belonging Framework; this framework guides us to strengthen our approach to diversity and inclusion and contributes to best practice across the TAFE system.

This document's principles and future actions were developed from consultation with a broad range of staff, students, and community members; we are proud of the input received and look forward to building on these partnerships into the future.

I encourage all community members to engage with the principles set out in our Belonging Framework as we work together to ensure these are embedded into our culture.

Phil Paterson  
Chief Executive Officer, Wodonga TAFE





# PURPOSE

The purpose of this framework is to embed the principles of **equity, collaboration, respect, diversity, accountability** into all aspects of Wodonga TAFE's operations. The Belonging Framework is a significant step in identifying the principles and actions that align with our core values to provide a safe, diverse and inclusive environment for staff, students and the broader Wodonga TAFE community.

## IMPLEMENTING THE BELONGING FRAMEWORK

The Belonging Framework was developed in consultation with Wodonga TAFE staff and students. We recognise the importance of consultation, collaboration and codesign with those who this framework directly impacts while being guided by the wider evidence base in the field of diversity and inclusion. Staff and students contributed towards developing the framework through surveys and focus groups.

As part of implementing the framework, a Working Party was formed with members of staff and students who bring experience and expertise across our priority groups. Students from the Cert IV and Diploma of Community Services, developed a calendar of events for the Working Party to action. This calendar plays an important role to raise awareness and provide opportunities for our staff and students to connect and celebrate diversity.

Action plans for each of the priority groups have been established or are in progress towards being finalised. These action plans will assist the Working Party to monitor progress and will be continually reviewed.

**"Inclusion to me, means ensuring others never feel left out or alone. "**  
**WODONGA TAFE staff member**

## DEFINING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

It is important to us that our community has a common language around the terms **diversity** and **inclusion**. The following definitions have been informed by our own staff and students.

Diversity describes the mix of people in our organisation and how they identify in relation to their age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability, gender, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, and their profession. As well as their education, work experiences and organisational role, these aspects are interconnected and form the individual's unique perspectives and life experiences.

Inclusion embraces, values and champions diversity through creating a culture where everyone has an equitable opportunity to contribute and thrive.

**"Inclusion to me means a safe place for all people to express themselves."**  
**WODONGA TAFE staff member**



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT WODONGA TAFE

Our many campuses have a diverse social and cultural fabric and heritage. We have taken steps towards embedding inclusion through various actions that include developing diversity and inclusion policies and launching a Reconciliation Action Plan. This Framework provides further guidance to ensure a welcoming and respectful environment for all staff, students, and the wider community.

At Wodonga TAFE we aim to ensure that everyone feels welcome and safe across our campuses. This includes understanding that some people experience additional barriers within systems. Due to this, we consulted staff and students to identify individuals and groups who may benefit from specific actions to address barriers some may face, including:

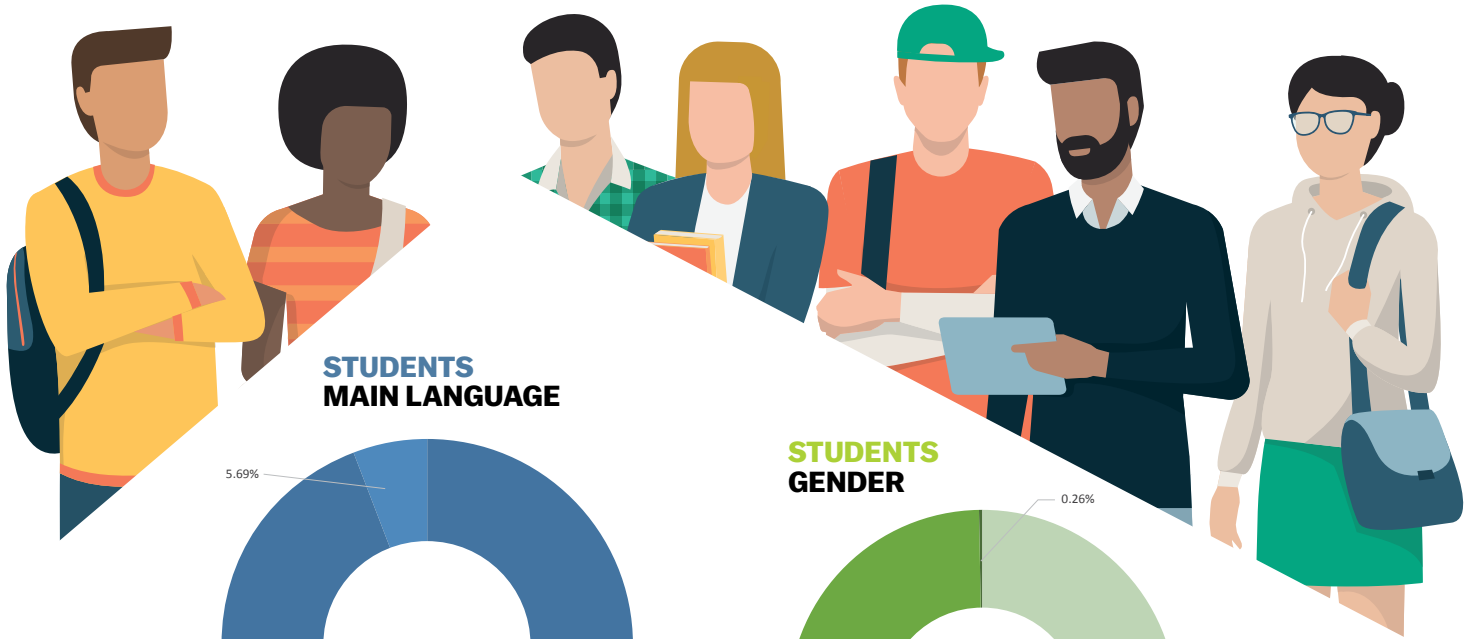
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community**
- **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community**
- **People living with disabilities**
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Gender Diverse, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) community**
- **People from low socio economic or education backgrounds**
- **Gender equality**
- **Australian Defence Veterans**

**“Wodonga TAFE has allowed me to build on my trust with others and especially gain more independence.”**

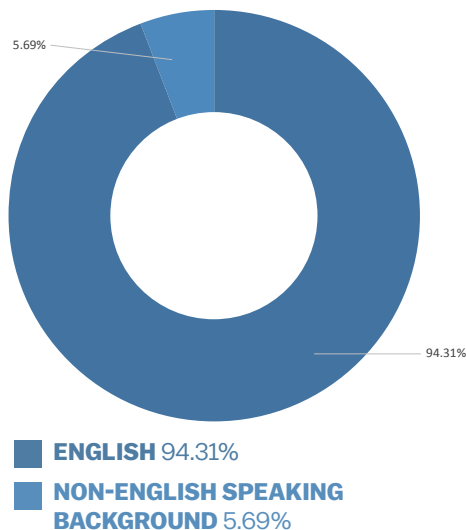
**WODONGA TAFE student**



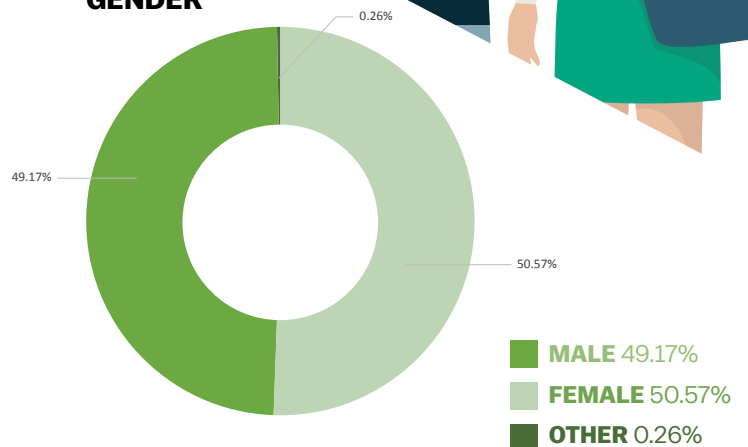
# DEMOGRAPHICS



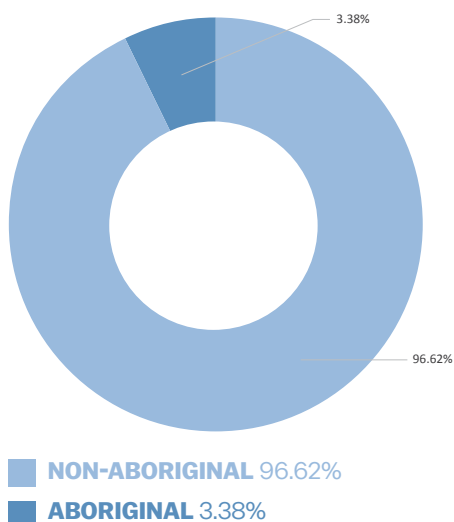
**STUDENTS  
MAIN LANGUAGE**



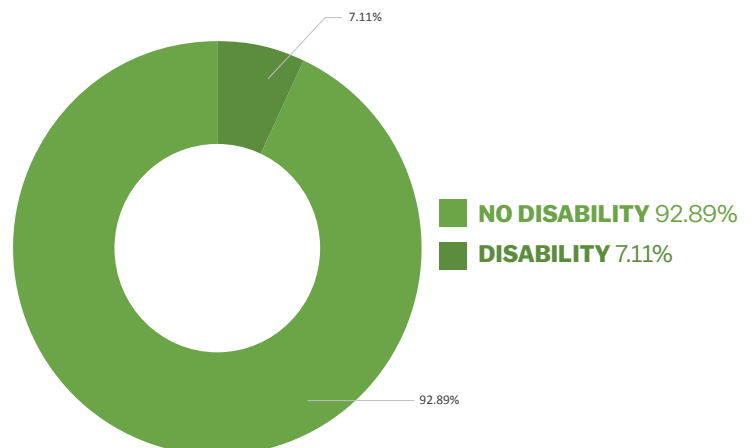
**STUDENTS  
GENDER**



**STUDENTS  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER HERITAGE**

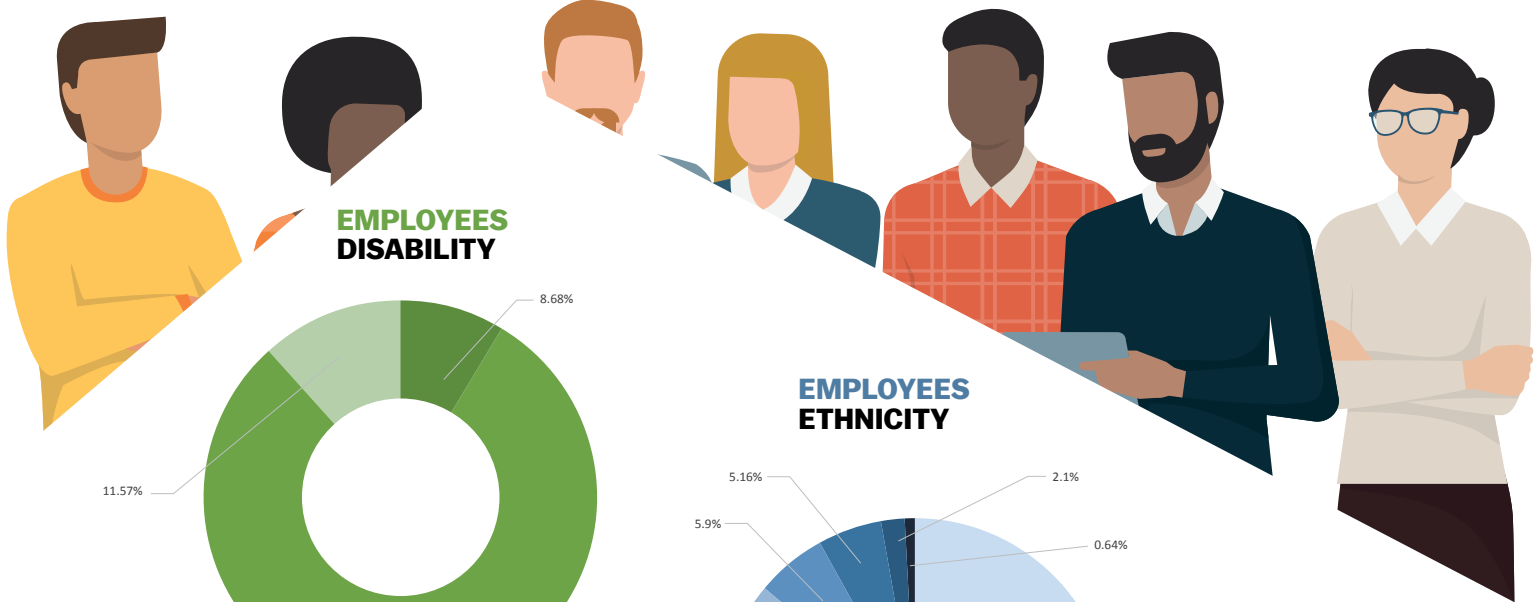


**STUDENTS DISABILITY**

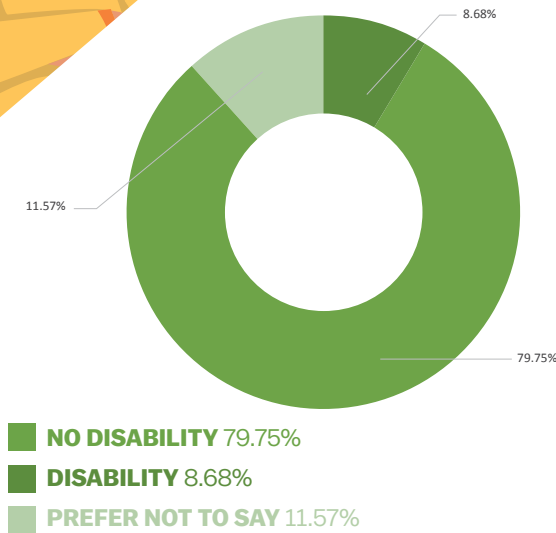




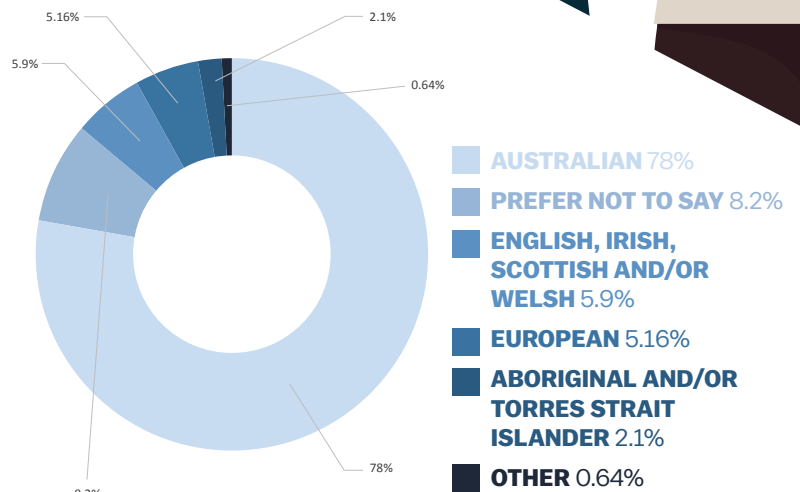
# DEMOGRAPHICS



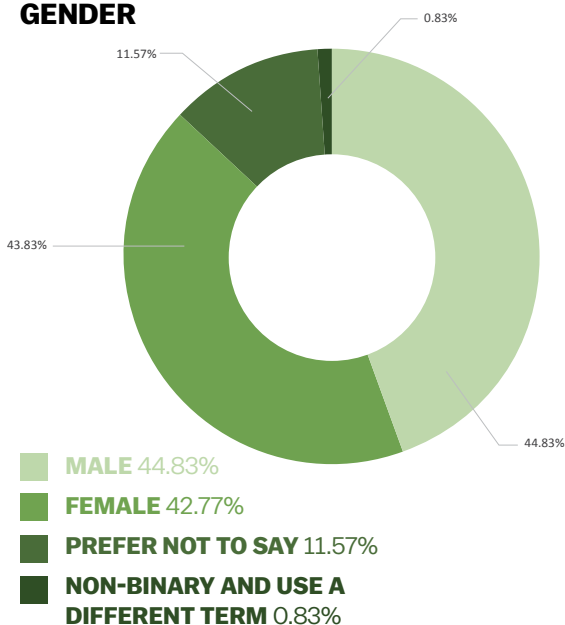
## EMPLOYEES DISABILITY



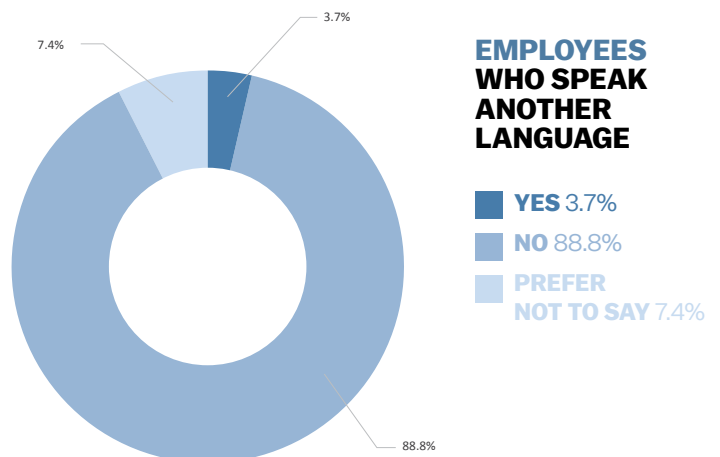
## EMPLOYEES ETHNICITY



## EMPLOYEES GENDER



## EMPLOYEES WHO SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE

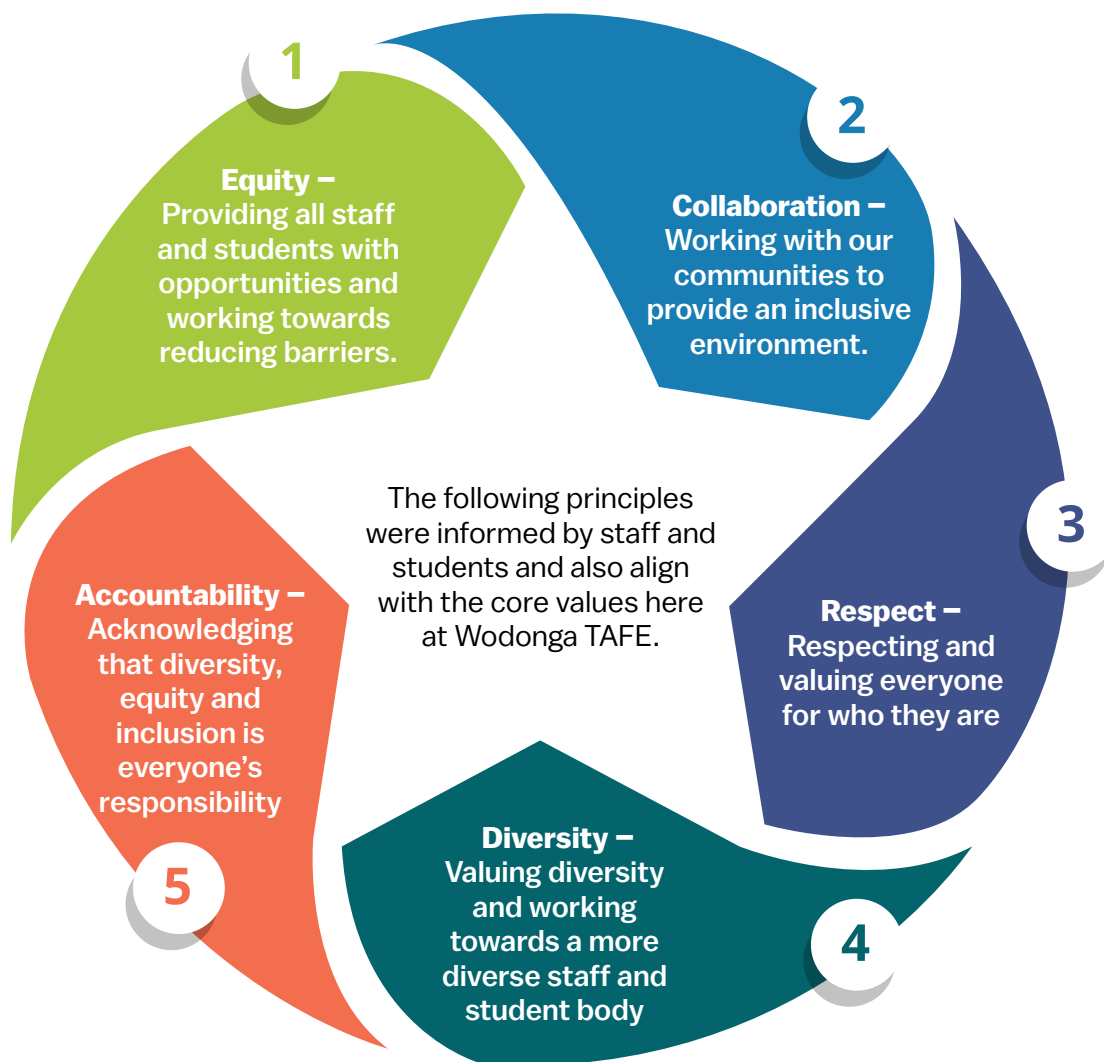






# GUIDING PRINCIPLES AT OUR CAMPUSES

We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming and respectful environment for all. We value the diversity and uniqueness of the staff, student and broader community and are committed to working towards addressing barriers and systemic issues that some community members face. As an organisation, we contribute towards best practice in providing welcoming and inclusive environments for all students, staff, and the broader community.





# PRIORITY GROUPS

Our Belonging Framework is designed for all staff and students, however we acknowledge that there are communities who experience additional barriers to accessing educational and work opportunities. We are also aware that people are part of more than one of the communities discussed below, which can lead to further discrimination and inequity. We are committed to specific actions to provide a welcoming and safe environment for the following communities:

## **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE**

Wodonga TAFE is committed to working alongside Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure cultural safety and an inclusive respectful environment. We acknowledge the cultural heritage and local knowledge of the communities that we live in and will continue to foster connections to community.

## **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE**

Wodonga TAFE recognises and values the innate diversity of the multicultural communities in our local area. We aim to work alongside the communities to develop links that promote education and employment pathways while valuing the unique contribution cultural diversity brings to our TAFE.

## **PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES**

Wodonga TAFE is committed to ensuring fair and equitable access to educational and employment opportunities for people living with disabilities. Wodonga TAFE recognises individual needs and continues to raise awareness of the benefits of providing equal opportunities for all students and staff in our community.

## **LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, GENDER DIVERSE, INTERSEX AND QUEER (LGBTIQ+) COMMUNITY**

Wodonga TAFE is committed to acknowledging the diversity of our local LGBTIQ+ community by seeking to create partnerships and collaboration. We acknowledge that we need to continue to create a safe community at TAFE that celebrates diversity by working towards inclusion.

## **PEOPLE FROM LOW SOCIO ECONOMIC OR EDUCATION BACKGROUNDS**

Wodonga TAFE continues to raise awareness of the unique situations of many people in our communities. We are committed to providing fair and equitable access to education and employment opportunities that are open to all people regardless of their economic or educational status.

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

Wodonga TAFE is committed to ensuring that all staff and students are treated fairly with dignity and respect. We are working towards an equitable Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), guided by the Gender and Equality Act 2020, that ensures gender equality is considered in all aspects of our operations and delivery of services.

## **AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE VETERANS**

Wodonga TAFE acknowledges its partnership with the Australian Defence Services and is committed to working with Australian Defence Veterans to connect and increase their participation in education and employment to ensure they are an active and valued part of our community. Through our Veterans and Family Strategy the TAFE will seek to provide the additional support and services to our Veterans and look to recognising the service and sacrifice of Veterans across our community.

**When I walk to class I see a Pride flag. As a lesbian it makes me feel welcome and safe. That TAFE isn't a judgemental place."**

**WODONGA TAFE student**

We acknowledge the richness of the local community and strive to continue to work together with our students and staff to provide a welcoming and safe environment. At all times we are committed to the philosophy of 'nothing about us, without us' and provide opportunities for collaboration and consultation on decisions that impact our communities.

**The slogan 'Nothing about us without us' became popular in the 1980s when it was used by disability rights activists. 'Nothing about us without us' is now used across the world to signify the importance of ensuring those impacted by decisions are consulted and valued.**

**Garaghty, 2015**





# ACTIONS

Wodonga TAFE is committed to continuing to grow and learn as a community. The actions coming out of this framework sit under one of the below themes. There are also actions specific to the priority groups listed within this framework. Further details regarding these actions are to be outlined in a separate plan and be continually reviewed and updated.

## Key themes include:



### CONNECTION & CELEBRATION

Providing opportunities for connection and collaboration for staff, students and the broader community, and celebrating diversity through events and awareness raising



### SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

Improving systems and structures through policy, updated procedures, and advocacy for broader systemic change



### LEARNING & TEACHING

Focusing on students and their experiences at Wodonga TAFE, and staff and their continued development



### PHYSICAL & ONLINE SPACES

Providing physical and online spaces at Wodonga TAFE that are safe and accessible environments for all, with a focus on priority groups



# PROGRESS

The success of this framework relies on all our staff and students working together as a community.

This framework is reviewed regularly to ensure it is up to date and reflective of our community. Actions are reviewed annually by key stakeholders.

The framework undergoes a more intensive review every three years, incorporating input from staff, students and the wider community to ensure it meets the needs of our community, along with our Board and Executive team.

The consultation undertaken to inform this framework provides baseline data to measure future data against.

The Belonging Framework is about meaningful engagement and change with staff, students and the wider community. Regular opportunities for feedback and input are to be provided to staff and students.







**WODONGA TAFE**  
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