

Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission**From:** Ngarrngga**Dated:** November 2024**Submission:**

We write this submission as a team of educators and researchers working within the Ngarrngga program to support teachers nationally to showcase Indigenous knowledges across the curriculum. In our work, we see and hear the impact of ongoing injustice and racism on Indigenous students across the education system. We know that Indigenous students experience racism at school at unacceptable rates. (School struggle to cope with racism against Indigenous students by peers prompting calls for more research - ABC News). We know that when students experience racism at school, their overall experience and learning is diminished. Anti-racist and culturally responsive teaching practices are essential to all Indigenous students being able to thrive in our schools. Every single member of a school community has a role to play in ensuring that students are experiencing safety and belonging in schools. AITSL released a framework to support this in 2020, the Indigenous cultural responsiveness capability framework. Schools across Victoria must be supported to enact the dispositions and dynamics that are necessary to make this vision a reality. Schools must be resourced and equipped to respectfully showcase Indigenous knowledges across the curriculum. This ensures not only that Indigenous students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, but also that every Australian learns the true history of our country, learns deep respect for the knowledge traditions that have been here well before the arrival of western curriculum, and challenge the deficit-based assumptions and beliefs that underpin racism in this country. In today's educational landscape, teachers face numerous systemic pressures that can make it challenging to prioritise and showcase Indigenous knowledges in their classrooms, and enact culturally responsive pedagogies. From increased standardised assessment to the challenges faced by students since the lockdowns of 2019-2021 and the increased burnout in the profession, teachers often find themselves navigating a complex web of expectations and constraints. Reform agendas, in a time of truth telling, treaty-negotiation and renewed conversation about reconciliation, must support teachers in this work. Reform agendas must acknowledge the time, space, and emotional bandwidth teachers need to contribute meaningfully to reconciliation efforts, rather than merely paying lip service to these ideals in standards and guidelines.

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