

ORGANISATION HANDBOOK



This handbook outlines the ethos, governance framework, partnerships, and operational policies for Connection Works.

*Version 1.0, September
2025*



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Connection Works Ethos

Vision

Our vision is a world where every person is met with dignity, cultural respect, and connection in times of crisis.

Mission

Our mission is to create safer systems and stronger communities through culturally led education, training, and support in suicide prevention.

Values

Connection

We believe that human connection is central to healing and wellbeing.

Cultural Leadership

Our programs are Indigenous-designed and led, grounded in cultural safety and community voice.

Collective Healing

Informed by the Social and Emotional Wellbeing model, we approach suicide through a holistic lens that recognises the impacts of colonisation, intergenerational trauma, and disconnection. We lean on the strengths of Indigenous culture and community as we work to prevent suicide.

Adaptability

We offer training in formats that meet diverse needs—online, self-paced, and in-person.

Empowerment through Education

We equip participants with practical knowledge and tools to respond to signs of suicide early, safely, and effectively in their communities.

Our Goals

Expand Access to culturally safe suicide prevention and intervention training across Australia and New Zealand through scalable and flexible program formats.

Embed Cultural Safety by integrating Indigenous knowledge and cultural advisory at every stage of program design and delivery.

Build Connection-Based Skills by teaching participants to recognise and respond to signs of suicide within a relational and culturally-safe framework.

Lead by Example by modelling best practice as an Indigenous-led organisation through cultural leadership, continuous improvement, and sector advocacy.

At the Heart of What We Do

Cultural Lens

Connection Works operates through a cultural lens that centres Indigenous sovereignty, leadership, and lived experience. We believe that programs designed to prevent suicide and promote wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must be led from within those communities. Cultural sovereignty means ensuring our ways of working reflect Indigenous worldviews, values, priorities, and strengths—not simply adapting mainstream approaches, but shaping new ones rooted in community knowledge and self-determination.

This lens acknowledges that healing, safety, and strength come from culture, connection, and Country. It also recognises the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation, racism, and exclusion—and the importance of designing systems that actively resist those harms. Cultural sovereignty isn't just about who leads the work; it's about ensuring the systems, relationships, and frameworks we operate within are accountable to community.

In practical terms, this means Connection Works programs are not culturally "informed" in name only. They are built from the ground up with Indigenous authority embedded in their structure, values, and purpose. Community voices, local knowledge, and cultural advisory processes shape how we deliver training, how we hold space for participants, and how we define success.

This commitment to cultural sovereignty is what underpins our Cultural Leadership Policy, which formalises our operational approach and sets the standards for how we work. The policy ensures that this lens is consistently applied across program development, delivery, and review—and that Connection Works continues to act with integrity, cultural accountability, and care.

Related Policies and Documents

Connection Works Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

Cultural Leadership Policy

Safe Language Policy

Lived and Living Experiences of Suicide

Lived and living experience of suicide is at the heart of Connection Works. The organisation was founded, in part, through the personal lived experience of Director Eli Toombs, whose personal journey has shaped the values, purpose, and direction of our work. This foundation informs our belief that lived experience is not just valuable – It is essential to designing programs that are real, relevant, and culturally safe.

We acknowledge that rates of suicide are disproportionately high among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As a result, many members of our communities carry lived or living experience of suicide – whether personally or related to loved ones or communities. We honour these stories and the strength it takes to carry them.

Connection Works is committed to safe and purposeful story sharing, guided by cultural values and trauma-informed practice. As an Indigenous organisation, we know that storytelling is a powerful tool for healing, individually and collectively. When shared respectfully and with care, stories can foster connection, reduce shame, and support learning. Whether it comes from facilitators or participants, we treat all lived experience with deep respect, and always prioritise cultural safety, consent, and emotional wellbeing.

Related Policies and Documents

Connection Works Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

Lived and Living Experience of Suicide Policy

Safe Language Policy

Working Together

Partnerships and Collaboration

Our Current Key Partnerships

Connection Works works in formal partnership with:

- The **National Wellbeing Alliance (NWA)** to support the reach, implementation, and funding of our programs. This partnership helps Connection Works identify opportunities for program delivery across Australia, particularly within Indigenous communities, and assists with funding applications and community mapping.
- The **UNSW Blakacademy**, under the leadership of Professor Maree Toombs, to provide ongoing insight and support for program development, evaluation, and understanding community needs. This includes collaboration on data collection, analysis, and integration of both qualitative and quantitative evidence to improve and evolve the I-SPOT program.

These partnerships help ensure Connection Works' programs are well-supported, evidence-informed, and community-driven.

What We Look For in a Partnership

When assessing a potential partnership, Connection Works considers the following:

- Shared values, particularly around Indigenous self-determination, cultural safety, and community ownership
- Practical contribution to program reach, delivery, or sustainability
- Experience working with Indigenous communities or clear commitment to developing that experience
- Cultural safety practices within the organisation
- Capacity to collaborate without taking control of Indigenous-led processes
- Mutual benefit, where both parties (and the broader sector) gain from the collaboration

We are especially focused on partnerships that support program implementation, funding, research, or policy impact.

Openness to New Partnerships

Connection Works is always open to exploring new partnerships that can extend the reach and impact of our programs and help improve outcomes for Indigenous communities. Whether through funding support, program delivery, research collaboration, or knowledge exchange, we welcome

contact from individuals and organisations who share our commitment to culturally safe, Indigenous-led approaches to suicide prevention and wellbeing.

How Partnerships Are Formed and Managed

Partnerships with Connection Works may be formal (with written agreements) or informal (based on collaboration and shared understanding). The process generally includes:

- Initial discussions to clarify purpose, roles, and fit
- Review of each party's values and work to check alignment
- Consultation with our advisors or governance structures, when needed
- Documented agreement if funding, data sharing, or ongoing collaboration is involved
- Clear point of contact from Connection Works for partnership management
- Regular check-ins to review progress and resolve any issues
- Exit strategy, if the partnership ends or changes over time

Any data shared with partners—such as program feedback or outcomes—is de-identified unless explicit consent is given.

Why We Value Partnerships

We engage in partnerships because:

- They help us reach more communities and deliver programs where they are needed most
- They provide access to funding, infrastructure, and networks beyond our own organisation
- They bring valuable skills and insights, particularly in research and evaluation
- They allow for sector collaboration, which strengthens the overall impact of suicide prevention work across Australia

For our partners, working with Connection Works offers access to Indigenous-designed programs, cultural insight, and community relationships that can improve the effectiveness and relevance of broader sector initiatives.

Partnerships are not about control or branding—they are about shared purpose and respectful collaboration that supports the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Sector Contribution

Connection Works is committed to actively contributing to the broader suicide prevention, mental health, and Indigenous health sectors. We

believe that sharing what we learn, and learning from others, strengthens the entire field and leads to better outcomes for communities.

Why It Matters to Us

As an Indigenous-led organisation working in suicide prevention, we recognise that collaborating across the sector helps build stronger, more responsive systems. It ensures our programs remain relevant, informed by evidence, and part of a wider movement toward culturally safe, community-driven change.

How We Learn From the Sector

We engage regularly with other organisations, researchers, and practitioners to:

- Stay informed of emerging best practice
- Reflect on our own approaches and learn from peers
- Strengthen networks that support our work
- Identify new opportunities for collaboration, funding, and research

These relationships offer valuable insights, professional development opportunities, and ensure we remain connected to the broader direction of suicide prevention and Indigenous health initiatives.

How We Give Back

Connection Works shares insights, experiences, and lessons learned through:

- Conference presentations, including Indigenous health, suicide prevention, and mental health forums
- Webinars and panels, contributing to discussions on culturally safe program design and delivery
- Case studies, reports, and articles, helping to build the evidence base for Indigenous-led work
- Openness to research and partnerships, particularly with institutions like UNSW's Blak Academy
- Sector collaboration, through working groups, advisory roles, and community-led networks

By participating in these activities, we aim to contribute practical knowledge, cultural insight, and community experience that others in the sector can learn from.

Related Policies and Documents

Cultural Leadership Policy

Partnerships, Collaboration and Sector Contribution Policy

Program Evaluation Policy

Program Feedback Policy

Operations Management

Risk Management

At Connection Works, we are committed to proactively identifying and managing potential risks to ensure the safety, sustainability, and effectiveness of our work. While we are currently a small and growing organisation, we recognise that thoughtful risk management is essential at every stage of our development.

Our approach is outlined in the Risk Management Policy, which sets out our principles and processes for identifying, assessing, and responding to risk. We also maintain a live Risk Register, which documents current risks, their potential impact, and the mitigation strategies in place. These tools are designed to support informed decision-making and help us protect our team, contributors, partners, and the communities we serve.

All staff and contractors are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these documents and contribute actively to identifying and addressing risks in their day-to-day work.

Related Policies and Documents

Risk Management Policy

Risk Register

Resources and Sustainability

Our Approach to Resources and Sustainability

At Connection Works, we are committed to building a sustainable, values-aligned organisation — even in our early stages. Currently operating under a sole owner-operator model, our approach is shaped by a deep respect for the limits of our current capacity, while laying foundations that can support responsible growth over time.

Working Within Our Means, Planning for Growth

We take a practical and realistic approach to resource use. With limited time, funding, and capacity, decisions are made with care and intention. We prioritise projects that align closely with our mission and offer meaningful, long-term impact. We avoid overcommitting and instead focus on doing a small number of things well. We seek appropriate support and advice where necessary to support our goals.

As the organisation grows, we will continue to expand our resource base in sustainable ways — including hiring staff or engaging contractors when the time is right. Growth will be paced and purpose-driven, ensuring that the quality of our work and the wellbeing of our people remain at the centre.

Financial Stewardship and Infrastructure

Financial sustainability begins with transparency and good stewardship. We maintain clear, accurate records, and make deliberate choices about how funds are allocated. Systems and processes are being put in place early — even while small — to ensure a smooth transition to broader operations when required. This includes scalable project management tools, documented procedures, and sustainable budgeting practices.

We are also developing relationships with aligned funders and partners, seeking opportunities that support both innovation and stability. Our long-term goal is to build a mixed revenue model that combines grant funding, fee-for-service work, and values-aligned collaborations.

People, Partnerships, and Energy

We are conscious of how our energy, time, and relationships are used. We aim to build a culture of reciprocity — where collaborations are meaningful, staff and contractors are well-supported, and the community is not overburdened. As we grow, we are committed to fair and ethical resourcing practices that value people's contributions and create supportive working conditions.

A Learning Culture

Sustainability isn't only about funding and infrastructure — it's also about mindset. At Connection Works, we see ourselves as a learning organisation. We seek feedback, reflect on what's working, and adapt as needed. By embedding these habits early, we aim to grow in a way that is both resilient and regenerative, staying grounded in purpose while adapting to the changing needs of our sector and communities.

Related Policies and Documents

Partnerships, Collaboration and Sector Contribution Policy

Risk Management Policy

Risk Register

Staff Development Policy

Staffing

Training and Development

At Connection Works, we are committed to continuous learning and reflective practice. All staff and contractors are encouraged to engage in relevant professional development that aligns with our values and enhances their ability to support safe, inclusive, and impactful work. We prioritise training in cultural safety, trauma-informed practice, safe language, and working with people with lived experience. Our training and development practices are guided by our Staff Development policy and informed by ongoing feedback, with opportunities reviewed and discussed during onboarding and regular check-ins.

Safe Language

Language matters. At Connection Works, we use respectful, inclusive, and person-centred language across all our internal and external communications. Our *Safe Language Policy* and *Safe Language Commitment* provide clear principles and examples, supporting staff to communicate in a way that avoids harm, upholds dignity, and reflects our values. We recognise that language is always evolving and remain open to learning from the communities we serve. All staff and contractors are expected to be familiar with these guidelines and apply them in their day-to-day work.

Staff Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing is fundamental to the way we work. As a small organisation with a values-driven mission, we know that emotional labour and community engagement can be rewarding but also demanding. We are committed to creating a supportive, flexible, and safe working environment where staff are encouraged to set healthy boundaries, debrief when needed, and take time for rest and recovery. Our wellbeing approach is embedded in our everyday culture and supported by our policies, including trauma-informed practices, flexible scheduling, and opportunities for reflection and care.

Related Policies and Documents

Safe Language Commitment

Safe Language Policy

Staff Development Policy

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Data Collection and Storage

Connection Works collects data in both digital and written formats to support program delivery, evaluation, and ongoing improvement. This includes participant feedback forms, facilitator reflections, and consultation notes. All data is stored securely and managed in line with our Privacy Policy, which outlines our commitment to protecting personal information and upholding privacy rights.

Confidentiality is a core principle in our work, especially given the sensitive nature of suicide prevention training. Facilitators and staff are trained to treat all data with care and integrity.

When information is shared with research partners or within the broader suicide prevention sector—for example, as part of our partnership with the UNSW Blakacademy—all data is de-identified. This means personal details are removed or altered so that individual contributors cannot be identified or traced, even indirectly.

Consent is always required before any personal feedback, quotes, or stories are used in publications, promotional materials, or case studies. If someone shares something meaningful, we treat it with respect—and we seek permission before sharing it beyond the training room.

Related Policies and Documents

Partnerships, Collaboration and Sector Contribution Policy

Privacy Policy

Privacy

At Connection Works, privacy is essential to maintaining cultural safety, personal dignity, and trust – especially given the sensitive nature of the stories and experiences often shared during our programs. We recognise that participants, staff, and community members may disclose personal information, including experiences of suicide, trauma, or distress, and we are committed to protecting that information at all times.

All personal or sensitive data – whether collected through feedback forms, emails, conversations, or during training – is handled in strict confidence. This includes any identifying information such as names, contact details, or personal stories. All data is stored securely, only accessed by authorised personnel, and used solely for its intended purpose.

We do not share personal information externally without clear consent. When insights or feedback are used in research or sector reporting, all data is de-identified to ensure individuals cannot be recognised or traced.

Privacy is not just a procedural requirement – it is a core part of our culturally safe and ethical practice. For more information on how we collect, store, and use data, please refer to our full Privacy Policy.

Related Policies and Documents

Privacy Policy

Quality Improvement

Connection Works is a young and growing organisation, currently operated under a sole owner-operator model with the support of collaborators, advisors, and contractors. While our team is small, our commitment to delivering culturally safe, high-quality programs is unwavering.

From the outset, we have prioritised building a foundation of quality improvement practices. We recognise that consistently delivering strong outcomes requires more than passion—it takes structured processes, reflective practice, and responsiveness to community and sector feedback.

Our quality improvement efforts focus on:

- Listening deeply to feedback from participants, facilitators, partners, and communities;
- Evaluating programs against best practice, cultural safety principles, and social and emotional wellbeing frameworks;
- Documenting learnings so that they inform future delivery;
- Evolving our systems and materials to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

As we expand to include staff and contractors over time, we are embedding quality improvement into the organisation's DNA—ensuring it remains central no matter our size. This means continuing to build clear review processes, training standards, partnership protocols, and feedback loops to improve both impact and cultural integrity.

We view quality improvement not as a set-and-forget task, but as a living, evolving commitment to better outcomes, stronger relationships, and lasting community trust.

Related Policies and Documents

Privacy Policy

Program Evaluation Policy

Program Feedback Policy

Records of Staff Commitment to Safe Language

Safe Language Policy

Staff Development Policy

Staff Training Register

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Training Venue Checklist

Transportation Policy

Policies

The following pages contain the organisational policies of Connection Works. These policies underpin our governance, guiding how we operate with integrity, accountability, and safety.

All staff and contractors are required to review these policies as part of their onboarding and to revisit them whenever updates, changes, or additions are made.

Policies are formally reviewed annually, or sooner if emerging best practice or feedback from communities and stakeholders calls for revision. This ensures our work remains responsive, relevant, and grounded in our core values.

Policy: **Advisory Group Policy (Version 1.0)**

Date: 13th August, 2025

Review date: 13th August, 2026

Policy Overview

Connection Works recognises the critical value of informed, diverse, and community-led guidance in the development and delivery of our programs. This policy outlines the organisation's commitment to engaging advisory groups that reflect cultural authority, lived and living experience, and subject matter expertise, to uphold the safety, quality, and relevance of our work.

1. Advisory Group Types

Connection Works may convene the following advisory groups as needed:

- **Cultural Advisory Group:** Provides guidance on cultural safety, Indigenous governance, and cultural relevance across all programs and practices.
- **Lived and Living Experience Group:** Offers insights grounded in lived experience of suicide, mental health challenges, or service engagement, ensuring our programs are authentic, trauma-informed, and community-focused.
- **Subject Matter Expert Group:** Includes clinicians, researchers, educators, and policy experts who offer professional and technical guidance relevant to suicide prevention, training delivery, and evaluation.

Where feasible, individuals may contribute across more than one advisory area.

2. Engagement Principles

All advisory group engagements are guided by:

- **Respect and Reciprocity:** All voices are valued and compensated appropriately. Contributions are acknowledged and responded to with action or feedback.
- **Cultural Leadership:** First Nations voices must be central to all advisory processes. For programs that engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, cultural advisory is non-negotiable.
- **Collaboration and Transparency:** Advisory input informs decision-making processes. Clear records are kept of decisions influenced or shaped by group recommendations.

3. Membership and Terms

- Members may be invited based on expertise, community standing,

lived experience, or organisational collaboration.

- Advisory groups may be ongoing, convened per project, or engaged for one-off consultation.
- The Connection Works Advisory Group Terms of Reference will be made available to participants prior to engagement.

4. Review and Evaluation

- Feedback from advisory groups will be sought regularly to assess the effectiveness of engagement.
- Input from advisory groups will directly inform program development, review, and continuous quality improvement.
- A summary of advisory contributions will be incorporated into internal program evaluations.

5. Alignment with Organisational Policies

This policy operates in alignment with the following internal policies:

- Cultural Leadership Policy
- Lived and Living Experience Policy
- Program Evaluation Policy

6. Policy Updates

This policy is reviewed annually.

Policy:	Cultural Leadership Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	13 th August, 2025
Review date:	13 th August, 2026
Policy Overview	
Connection Works is Indigenous-led and grounded in sovereignty, cultural strength, and holistic wellbeing. Our work honours the principles of Cultural Leadership by embedding Indigenous leadership, wisdom, and the social and emotional wellbeing at every step—from design through delivery.	
1. Indigenous Leadership in Design and Development	
• All programs and materials are designed and developed by Indigenous staff, with oversight and input from Indigenous leaders, advisers, and specialist organisations. • Our approach is guided by the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) framework, which understands wellbeing as holistic—encompassing connections to body, mind, emotion, family, community, culture, Country, and spirituality	
2. Value for Complementary Knowledge	
• While Indigenous leadership remains central, we value and integrate high-quality research and best-practice insights generated by non-Indigenous researchers and sector leaders—whenever these enrich our holistic, culturally grounded approach. • We ensure these external resources do not override Indigenous guidance, but support and inform our work where relevant.	
3. Indigenous-Led Training Delivery	
• Program delivery is led by Indigenous trainers as a priority to ensure cultural authority, safety, and authentic connection with participants. • Only in exceptional cases, when no suitable Indigenous trainer is available, may a non-Indigenous co-facilitator be included in program delivery — and only if they have received suitable cultural training and have been vetted by the Director of Connection Works. In all cases, the lead trainer remains Indigenous. • Where Connection Works staff deliver programs designed and accredited by other organisations (for example, Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid or I-ASIST), the trainer policies of those programs	

apply.

4. Ongoing Cultural Guidance

- We maintain active engagement with a cultural advisory group, drawing on Elders, regional knowledge holders, and community leaders for continuous input, review, and refinement of our programs—tailored to the unique needs of diverse Indigenous communities.
- Ongoing cultural input ensures each program meets best-practice safety, relevance, and cultural resonance.

5. Safe Language and Cultural Safety

- Our Safe Language Policy includes cultural guidance and requires all staff and contractors to sign a “Safe Language Commitment”, reflecting a shared commitment to culturally safe, respectful communication.
- The Cultural Leadership Policy aligns with and reinforces this commitment—ensuring cultural safety is not only in what we say, but how we design and deliver our programs.

6. Why This Matters

This policy reflects our unwavering belief that cultural sovereignty and connection are foundational to healing and suicide prevention for Indigenous people. By centring Indigenous leadership and the SEWB framework, we ensure our programs are not only effective—but deeply relevant, respectful, and resilient. Our approach models the values of self-determination, cultural strength, and relational wellbeing that are essential to true, lasting impact.

7. Policy Updates

This policy is reviewed annually or as required in response to sector changes or feedback from community and professional stakeholders.

Policy:	Lived and Living Experience of Suicide Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	22 nd August, 2025
Review date:	22 nd August, 2026
Policy Overview	
This policy outlines how Connection Works respectfully and safely includes lived and living experiences of suicide across its programs, training, and organisational practices. It affirms our belief that lived experience is a vital source of insight, leadership, and connection—and must be included with care, safety, and purpose.	
1. Our Commitment	
Connection Works recognises that the voices of those with lived or living experience of suicide—whether as people who have experienced suicide thoughts or actions, carers, family members, or those bereaved—bring significant value to the design, delivery, and evaluation of our programs. We are committed to: • Including lived experience in our program design and delivery meaningfully, not just symbolically • Respecting the diversity of lived experiences and avoiding assumptions or generalisations • Creating spaces that are culturally safe, trauma-informed, and supportive	
2. Program Delivery and Advisory	
• Wherever possible, Connection Works aims to have at least one facilitator with a lived experience background involved in the delivery of training programs. • The Lived and Living Experience Advisory Group plays a key role in reviewing and shaping programs and materials, ensuring our work remains grounded, relevant, and responsive. • We ensure that the inclusion of lived experience is done ethically, safely, and with consent, aligned with current sector guidelines and best practice.	
3. Respectful Story Sharing	
While lived experience can offer deep insight and connection, story sharing must always be done with care: • Facilitators should share personal stories only where they support the learning outcomes of the session.	

- Sharing must be intentional, respectful and not take over the purpose of the training.
- Staff and facilitators are encouraged to undertake training in safe storytelling practices, and to reflect on when, why, and how they share.
- All lived experiences are valid and unique – none should be minimised, compared, or judged.

4. Safe Sharing in Training Spaces

- In training environments, participants may choose to share their own lived experiences. This is welcomed and respected, but must be managed carefully to protect both the person sharing and others in the room.
- Facilitators must ensure that any sharing is voluntary, not prompted or pressured, and is met with confidentiality, compassion, and boundaries.
- If a participant shows signs of distress, facilitators must respond promptly and appropriately, offering breaks, follow-up, or referrals where needed.

5. Commitment to Ongoing Learning

- Connection Works staff and facilitators are expected to stay up to date with current sector guidance around lived experience inclusion, safe language, and trauma-informed practice.
- All staff must follow the Safe Language Policy and sign the Safe Language Commitment, which includes specific cultural and lived experience guidance.
- New insights, frameworks, or resources from lived experience-led organisations will be integrated into our practices as part of ongoing quality improvement.

6. Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, based on feedback from staff, facilitators, our Advisory Group, or sector insights.

Policy: **Partnerships, Collaboration and Sector Contribution Policy (Version 1.0)**

Date: 22nd August, 2025

Review date: 22nd August, 2026

Policy Overview

This policy outlines how Connection Works builds and maintains partnerships, contributes to the broader sector, and collaborates with organisations, researchers, community groups, and other stakeholders. It ensures that all external engagement is aligned with our values, culturally safe, and focused on improving outcomes for Indigenous communities.

1. Guiding Principles

All partnerships and collaborations must reflect and uphold the following:

- **Cultural Leadership:** Indigenous voice, leadership, and cultural safety are central.
- **Connection and Respect:** All engagement must prioritise respectful relationships and genuine connection.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Partnerships must offer value to both Connection Works and the communities or organisations involved.
- **Shared Impact:** The ultimate goal is to enhance suicide prevention outcomes and support collective healing.

2. Types of Engagement

Connection Works participates in a variety of sector-facing activities, including but not limited to:

- Strategic partnerships with community organisations, universities, and health bodies
- Advisory roles or sector working groups
- Participation in conferences, forums, and roundtables
- Co-designed research initiatives
- Program co-delivery or training partnerships
- Development of joint publications or case studies
- Engagement with sector funders and policymakers

3. Forming and Assessing Partnerships

When considering a new partnership or collaboration, Connection Works will assess the opportunity based on:

- Alignment with our mission and vision

- Contribution to improved community outcomes
- Cultural safety and leadership structures
- Evidence of community consultation and trust
- Capacity for shared learning and two-way exchange

Where necessary, formal agreements or MOUs may be established, particularly when co-delivering programs or participating in research.

4. Sector Contribution

Connection Works actively shares insights and contributes back to the suicide prevention, mental health, and Indigenous health sectors. This includes:

- Presenting at national and regional conferences (e.g., mental health, suicide prevention, Indigenous wellbeing)
- Participating in sector-led working groups
- Delivering or joining webinars and workshops
- Sharing case studies, findings, and reflections through articles and reports
- Contributing to peer-reviewed research and Indigenous-led data initiatives
- Supporting sector innovation through open, culturally safe dialogue

This work helps build the evidence base for Indigenous-led approaches and increases visibility of culturally grounded solutions.

5. Receiving Sector Insight

Connection Works gains value from ongoing sector engagement by:

- Staying informed of emerging evidence, trends, and best practices
- Building stronger networks for advocacy and collaboration
- Learning from the experiences of other community-led and Indigenous organisations
- Strengthening our own programs through shared knowledge and partnerships
- We acknowledge that listening is as important as contributing and regularly reflect on how sector insights shape our work.

6. Supporting Innovation and Growth

Connection Works is always open to exploring new partnerships that

can:

- Expand the reach and impact of our programs
- Improve outcomes for Indigenous communities
- Lead to stronger, culturally safe systems
- Support the co-design and delivery of new initiatives

We welcome discussions with organisations and individuals who share our values and are committed to strengthening community-led approaches to suicide prevention.

7. Oversight and Review

- The Director of Connection Works is responsible for approving new partnerships and overseeing sector engagement activities.
- An annual partnership and sector engagement review will be conducted to assess effectiveness and identify new opportunities.
- All sector activities must be recorded and reflected in internal reports to ensure transparency and continuous learning.

8. Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, based on feedback from staff, facilitators, our Advisory Group, or sector insights.

Policy:	Privacy Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	8 th August, 2025
Review date:	8 th August, 2026
Policy Overview	
Connection Works is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals engaging with the service. This policy outlines how we manage personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).	
1. Collection of Personal Information	
We collect personal information necessary to deliver our programs effectively, ensure cultural safety, and fulfil our funding and reporting obligations. Information we may collect: • Name, contact details, and demographic information • Cultural identification (e.g., Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status) • Feedback, survey responses, and course reflections • Emergency contact details • Payment or funding eligibility details (where applicable) How we collect it: • Through online registration forms • During course participation (online or in person) • Feedback surveys or evaluation tools • Direct communications with our team NOTE: Where Connection Works programs are delivered via a host organisation, the host organisation may be responsible for the collection and management of data relating to program participants. In this scenario, the privacy policy of the host organisation will apply.	
2. Use of Personal Information	
We use personal information for the following purposes: • To manage course participation and logistics	

- To provide culturally safe support during and after the course
- To measure impact and improve the course experience
- To report anonymised data to funders and stakeholders
- To respond to enquiries or provide follow-up care when appropriate

We will never sell or rent your personal data to third parties.

3. Storage and Security

Your data is securely stored using encrypted cloud-based systems located in Australia or countries with equivalent data protection laws. We apply:

- Password-protected access to systems
- Staff training on privacy and data protection
- Annual data audits
- Role-based permissions

Hard-copy information (if collected) is stored in locked cabinets and securely destroyed when no longer needed.

4. Disclosure of Information

We may disclose personal information:

- To course facilitators or cultural advisors on a need-to-know basis
- To emergency services if required to protect someone's safety
- To external evaluators or researchers — only with consent and de-identification of data
- When legally required (e.g. subpoena or duty of care obligations)

5. Access and Correction

You may request access to your personal information or request corrections by contacting our Privacy Officer (details below). We will respond within 30 days.

6. Website and Online Data

When using our website or online course platform, we may collect de-identified data such as:

- IP address, browser type and usage patterns
- Cookies to enhance user experience

We do not use third-party trackers to profile users. All analytics are anonymised and used to improve website usability.

7. Data Retention

We retain personal information only as long as necessary for:

- Compliance with legal or reporting obligations
- Ensuring appropriate post-course care
- Internal evaluation and quality improvement

After this, data is securely deleted or de-identified.

8. Complaints and Feedback

If you believe we have breached your privacy, please contact our Privacy Officer. We will investigate all concerns fairly and in line with our obligations under the Privacy Act.

You can also lodge a complaint with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) at www.oaic.gov.au.

9. Contact Us

Eli Toombs – Privacy Officer
Connection Works

Email: eli.toombs@connectionworks.com.au

Phone: 0498 362 191

10. Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary to ensure compliance. Changes will be reflected in the version control header and published at www.connectionworks.net/privacy-policy.

Policy:	Program Evaluation Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	28 th August, 2025
Review date:	28 th August, 2026
Policy Overview	
Connection Works is committed to delivering programs that are relevant, effective, and culturally safe. This policy outlines how our programs are reviewed, evaluated, and continuously improved to reflect community needs, sector standards, and emerging research.	
1. When and How Evaluation Occurs	
Program evaluation occurs at least annually and includes a structured review of: • All participant, host, and facilitator feedback received throughout the year • All program materials, reviewed for cultural and factual accuracy, relevance, and currency • All statistical data, research references, and sector information to ensure alignment with the latest evidence and community trends In addition to this annual review, evaluation may also occur at key points of program development, after significant delivery cycles, or in response to major feedback or community shifts.	
2. Evaluation Process	
The evaluation process includes: • Analysis of participant feedback forms • Consultation with facilitators, particularly regular trainers and those working in high-priority communities • Feedback from host organisations and key community partners • Meetings with Connection Works' cultural advisory group to reflect on program direction, safety, and community relevance • Internal staff review and program update session, where materials and delivery practices are assessed and revised • Sharing of updates with all facilitators, including new resources, content changes, or delivery improvements	

3. Key Evaluation Questions

The following guiding questions shape our evaluation process:

- Is the program culturally safe and responsive for the communities we are working with?
- Does the program still align to our organisation's vision, mission and values?
- Are the materials accurate, current, and reflective of best practice?
- Are participants leaving the training with confidence and practical skills?
- Are there any gaps in accessibility, relevance, or delivery that need addressing?
- How can the lived experience of suicide and community feedback further inform improvements?
- Are delivery formats working effectively across online, self-paced, and in-person models?

4. Research Collaboration

Connection Works partners with research institutions, including the **UNSW Blakacademy**, to ensure that evaluation is informed by strong data and community-led research. Where possible, insights and outcomes from research partnerships are used to:

- Strengthen evidence for program impact
- Guide content updates and delivery improvements
- Identify emerging needs within Indigenous suicide prevention

5. Accountability and Communication

The Director of Connection Works oversees the evaluation process and is responsible for ensuring it is completed annually and acted upon. Where feedback from individuals or organisations results in changes, efforts are made to communicate those changes back to the contributor, either directly or through broader channels such as email updates, community meetings, or facilitator briefings.

6. Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary.

Policy:	Program Feedback Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	3 rd September, 2025
Review date:	3 rd September, 2026
Policy Overview	
Feedback is essential to maintaining the quality, relevance, and cultural safety of Connection Works' programs. This policy outlines how we gather, review, and respond to feedback to ensure our work remains community-led, responsive, and continuously improving.	
1. Who We Collect Feedback From	
Connection Works actively seeks and welcomes feedback from:	
• Program participants • Host organisations and community partners • Funders and commissioning bodies • Researchers and academic collaborators • Sector leaders and peak bodies • Indigenous community members, Elders, and cultural advisors	
2. How We Collect Feedback	
Feedback may be collected through a variety of formal and informal channels, including:	
• Participant feedback forms (digital or paper-based) • Our website via contact form • Emails, letters, or direct communications from stakeholders • In-person discussions during training delivery, meetings, conferences, or community visits • Facilitator debriefs and reflective practice sessions	
Program participants can share feedback anonymously by not including identifying names or details on feedback forms.	
3. Responsibility for Reviewing and Responding	
The Director of Connection Works is responsible for:	
• Regularly reviewing all program-related feedback • Identifying patterns, concerns, or improvement opportunities	

- Liaising with staff and advisors where relevant
- Determining appropriate responses or adjustments to program content or delivery

4. Making Changes

When feedback leads to changes or improvements in program delivery, content, or practice, Connection Works will:

- Acknowledge the contributor, where possible, and thank them for their input
- Explain the change made (or rationale for not proceeding with a change)
- Share updates or revised materials, if applicable, with the contributor and broader network (e.g. via newsletter, website, or follow-up communication)

All feedback is treated respectfully and confidentially, and contributors are encouraged to be part of the ongoing dialogue that shapes Connection Works programs.

5. Complaints Management

If a complaint is received by Connection Works, we commit to:

- Acknowledging the complaint in a timely manner
- Having a transparent investigation process
- Engaging in regular communication with the contributor throughout the resolution
- Providing clear timelines for response and resolution
- Documenting complaint outcomes

Where appropriate, cultural protocols will be integrated into complaint handling, for example, through recognising community accountability structures or engaging in cultural mediation to resolve issues.

6. Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary.

Policy: Risk Management Policy (Version 1.0)

Date: 3rd September, 2025

Review date: 3rd September, 2026

Policy Overview

Connection Works is committed to identifying, assessing, managing, and reviewing risks to ensure the safety, effectiveness, and sustainability of our programs, people, and operations—especially when working with sensitive subject matter and vulnerable communities.

1. Risk Identification

Risks are identified through multiple avenues, including:

- Program delivery planning
- Staff and contractor input
- Participant feedback
- Incident reports
- Advisory group input
- Ongoing reflection and evaluation

Once identified, risks are documented in the Risk Register, which includes the category, likelihood, potential impact, mitigation strategy, and person responsible.

2. Risk Categories

Connection Works acknowledges multiple types of risk, including:

- **Physical:** Harm to staff, facilitators, or participants (e.g. during in-person training)
- **Psychological:** Emotional or mental distress related to training content (especially around suicide and trauma)
- **Financial:** Mismanagement or misallocation of funds
- **Reputational:** Loss of community trust or professional standing
- **Resource:** Insufficient staffing, materials, or program infrastructure

3. Risk Management and Mitigation

Risks are addressed through:

- Prevention strategies (e.g. facilitator training, culturally safe program design)
- Safe language practices

- Safety protocols (e.g. crisis contact points in training)
- Strong administrative and financial processes
- Regular review of feedback and incidents
- Staff training – ensuring all staff and facilitators are equipped to manage sensitive content, use safe language, and engage with community respectfully.

4. Risk Monitoring and Review

- The Risk Register is formally reviewed every 6 months by the Director.
- New and emerging risks may be added at any time.
- Mitigation strategies are monitored for effectiveness and updated as needed.
- Internal advisory, staff, or facilitator meetings may trigger additional reviews.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Director holds primary responsibility for risk oversight.
- All staff and contractors are expected to contribute to risk identification, highlight potential concerns early, and follow risk mitigation processes.
- Facilitators must immediately report any incidents, participant distress, or concerns experienced during training.

6. Risk Tolerance Statement

Connection Works acknowledges that some level of risk is inherent when delivering programs that deal with trauma, suicide, and mental health—particularly in community and on-Country settings. We are committed to minimising harm, supporting all involved, and ensuring psychological safety, but we also accept that some residual risk must be tolerated in pursuit of our core mission: to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through respectful, culturally safe, and meaningful programming.

7. Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary.

Policy:	Safe Language Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	13 th August, 2025
Review date:	13 th August, 2026
Policy Overview	
Connection Works is committed to using safe, respectful, and inclusive language across all aspects of our operations. This policy ensures the cultural and psychological safety for program participants, staff, contractors, and partners.	
1. Scope	
This policy applies to all Connection Works staff, facilitators, contractors, and contributors involved in the development, delivery, review, or promotion of any Connection Works programs, including the I-SPOT program and all aligned or accredited suicide intervention training.	
2. Policy Statement	
Connection Works recognises that language shapes perceptions, relationships, and wellbeing. We are committed to: • Using recovery-oriented, trauma-informed, and strengths-based language in all internal and external communications. • Promoting culturally safe communication, particularly when working with or referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. • Ensuring that all program materials and communications are reviewed for safe language before publication or delivery. • Embedding language safety into our supervision, reflection, and support processes for staff, contractors and volunteers.	
3. Foundational Resources	
Connection Works is an organisational signatory of the <i>National Communications Charter</i> published by Life in Mind, affirming our commitment to safe, inclusive language that supports help-seeking, reduces stigma, and fosters culturally and psychologically safe environments. We encourage our staff and contractors to read and sign the <i>National Communications Charter</i> personally too. All staff and contractors must review and sign their commitment to using safe language practices. This includes active engagement with the following core resources: • Mental Health and Suicide Safe Language:	

- o Recovery Oriented Language Guide (Mental Health Coordinating Council)
 - o Trauma-Informed Language Guide (Mental Health Coordinating Council)
 - o Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Mental Health (Mental Health Coordinating Council)
 - o Our words matter: Guidelines for language use (Mindframe)
- Culturally Safe Language:
 - o Koorified: Aboriginal Communication and Language (VACCHO and La Trobe University)
 - o Communicating Positively: A Guide to Appropriate Aboriginal Terminology (NSW Health)
 - o Glossary of Healing Terms (Healing Foundation)
- Lived and Living Experience of Suicide:
 - o Lived Experience of Suicide Language and Imagery Guide (Roses in the Ocean)

These documents form the foundation for Connection Works' language standards and are required reading for all team members. Following review of these documents, all staff are required to sign a **Safe Language Commitment**.

This list of resources may be reviewed and changed at any stage, based on available of best practice guidelines. If this occurs, staff will be required to read the new resources and acknowledge their review of these resources in writing within 30 days of being notified of the amendment of this policy.

4. Staff Training

All staff and contractors are encouraged to engage in ongoing training and learning opportunities related to safe and inclusive language, ensuring our communication reflects best practice and our organisational values. The online learning modules by Life in Mind related to the National Communications Charter are encouraged as baseline learning for all staff and contractors.

5. Implementation and Compliance

To support this policy:

- All new staff and contractors must sign a **Safe Language Commitment** after reviewing the above resources as part of onboarding.

- Program content, including training materials, handouts, website content, and public communications, is reviewed for safe language prior to delivery or publication.
- **Advisory groups**, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors and sector specialists, may be consulted to ensure materials are respectful, relevant, and culturally appropriate.
- Connection Works regularly consults publicly available guidelines and recommendations from sector leading organisations and peer reviewed research as part of our continuous improvement.
- Safe language is a **standing topic in staff support, supervision, and reflective practice**, ensuring accountability and continued learning.
- Program participants or other people can provide feedback to us about the language we use through the contact information on the Connection Works website.

6. Policy Updates

This policy is reviewed annually or as required in response to sector changes or feedback from community and professional stakeholders.

Policy:	Staff Development Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	20 th August, 2025
Review date:	20 th August, 2026
Policy Overview	
Connection Works is committed to fostering the ongoing growth and development of all staff. We recognise that continual learning is essential to delivering culturally safe, evidence-informed, and responsive programs in the areas of suicide prevention, mental health, and education.	
1. Commitment to Ongoing Learning	
We actively encourage all staff and contractors to pursue training and development aligned with their roles, responsibilities, and aspirations. Key areas of professional learning include: • Mental health and suicide prevention best practice • Culturally safe training design and delivery • Trauma-informed and recovery-oriented practice • Safe and inclusive language (as outlined in the <i>Safe Language Policy</i>) • Education and adult learning methodology Learning is not limited to formal programs. We acknowledge that professional development takes many forms, including: • Attending workshops, courses, or conferences • Participating in accredited training programs • Pursuing formal education (e.g., tertiary study) • Reading relevant literature and research • Peer learning, supervision, and reflective practice • Sharing lived and professional experiences	
2. Sharing Knowledge and Building Capacity	
Connection Works values knowledge as a collective asset. Staff are encouraged to share insights and skills gained through professional development with their peers—through internal workshops, reflective practice sessions, and informal knowledge exchange. Where appropriate, staff may also contribute externally to sector growth through presentations, publications, or collaborations—strengthening our	

reputation as a culturally safe, Indigenous-led organisation.

3. Support and Resourcing

The organisation will seek to provide reasonable support for staff development, including access to time, financial assistance, or flexible work arrangements, where possible and aligned with operational needs. Requests for development opportunities should be discussed with supervisors and considered in line with individual work plans.

4. Mandatory Training Requirements

To ensure a consistent standard of cultural safety, program quality, and wellbeing-informed practice, all staff and contractors at Connection Works are required, at a minimum, to complete the following mandatory training and development programs:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and/or Indigenous Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (I-ASIST)
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and/or Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid (AMHFA)
- Safe Language Training as stipulated in the *Safe Language Policy*

These requirements reflect our commitment to best practice in suicide prevention, culturally safe service delivery, and organisational integrity.

Completion of these programs is a condition of engagement and forms part of our onboarding process. Staff are expected to keep their knowledge current, and some programs may require periodic renewal. Additional mandatory training may be introduced as part of our commitment to continuous improvement and sector alignment.

5. Policy Updates

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Policy:	Staff Wellbeing Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	21 st August, 2025
Review date:	21 st August, 2026
Policy Overview	
At Connection Works, we recognise that our work can be emotionally demanding. Our commitment to staff wellbeing is grounded in the understanding that caring for others begins with caring for ourselves and each other.	
1. Emotional Impact and Self-Care	
Staff and contractors may be exposed to sensitive stories and emotionally impactful conversations that can affect their mental and emotional wellbeing. We encourage all staff to: • Prioritise their wellbeing as a core part of professional practice • Monitor their own emotional load and recognise signs of stress, fatigue, or burnout • Take breaks, pace their workload, and seek support early when needed Connection Works actively supports a workplace culture where rest, reflection, and boundaries are respected, not seen as weakness.	
2. Training Limits and Workload Management	
To support mental and emotional recovery, the following limits apply to all training delivery roles: • No more than four (4) full training days per staff member per week, to allow space for preparation, rest, integration, and personal wellbeing. • Schedules are designed to provide breathing room, especially after delivering intensive or emotionally impactful content.	
3. Access to Support	
While Connection Works is a small organisation, we ensure that staff and contractors have access to meaningful support: • Internal Support: Team members can reach out to the Connection Works' Director and members of our advisory group for debriefing, reflection, and informal support. • Partner Organisation Support: When delivering an externally accredited program (e.g. LivingWorks ASIST, Mental Health First Aid, etc), staff may access additional debriefing or psychological support via support mechanisms provided by that organisation.	

- **Employee Assistance Program:** Where staff require more support than what is available through our internal structure and partner organisations, they can access external counselling through Equilibrium Psychology, our EAP provider, paid for by Connection Works. Staff can learn more about Equilibrium Psychology by visiting; <https://www.equilibriumpsychology.com.au/eap-counselling>.

4. Peer Support and Supervision

Staff are encouraged to participate in peer reflection and structured supervision, which are vital practices for maintaining personal wellbeing, supporting team connection, and upholding cultural safety in our work.

Connection Works commits to fostering a workplace culture where:

- Wellbeing is prioritised alongside performance
- Staff are empowered to speak openly about challenges
- Cultural and emotional safety are core to team practices
- Collective care is embraced as part of Indigenous ways of working

5. Policy Updates

This policy is reviewed annually or as new wellbeing practices, team needs, or sector expectations emerge. Staff are encouraged to contribute feedback or suggestions to help ensure the policy remains practical, responsive, and caring.

Policy:	Transportation Policy (Version 1.0)
Date:	13 th August, 2025
Review date:	13 th August, 2026
Policy Overview	
This policy outlines the expectations and safety measures for staff and contractors travelling on behalf of Connection Works for work, training delivery, and related activities.	
7. Use of Rental Vehicles	
- When rental vehicles are required for work-related travel, they must be sourced from reputable providers, be fully insured, and meet all roadworthy standards. - Vehicles must be suited to the terrain, especially when travel involves rural or remote areas. Where 4WD or off-road capability is required, appropriate vehicle hire will be arranged in advance. - Staff and contractors are expected to operate rental vehicles in accordance with local laws and safety standards.	
8. Use of Personal Vehicles	
- Staff and contractors may use personal vehicles for work-related travel when appropriate. These vehicles must be: - Roadworthy - Regularly serviced and maintained in line with manufacturer guidelines - Fully insured, with comprehensive or equivalent coverage - Fuel reimbursement will be provided for approved work travel, based on receipts or agreed mileage rates.	
9. Fatigue and Travel Safety	
- Connection Works recognises the risks associated with driving long distances after a full day of training. - If travel after a workshop involves more than 2 hours of driving, especially in rural or remote areas or during dusk or night hours, the organisation will build an additional night of accommodation into the training agreement to support staff safety and ensure well-rested travel conditions. - Staff and contractors must notify the office in advance if travel conditions pose any safety concerns.	
10. General Travel Expectations	
Staff and contractors are expected to plan travel with sufficient	

time to account for road conditions, weather, fatigue, and rest breaks.

- Connection Works will support reasonable accommodation and logistical arrangements to ensure safe and effective travel for all work-related activities.
- In case of vehicle breakdowns, accidents, or emergencies, staff and contractors must prioritise their safety and notify their supervisor or relevant contact as soon as practicable.

11. Insurance and Liability

- Connection Works maintains appropriate organisational insurance, but individual travellers are responsible for ensuring that personal or rental vehicle use complies with policy requirements.
- Any incidents or accidents during work travel must be formally reported to the Director within 24 hours.

12. Policy Updates

This policy is reviewed annually.

Appendix

The appendices on the following pages support the implementation of the content and policies outlined in this Program Handbook. These tools and resources are subject to changes and updates on an annual basis, or as need arises.

Program Review Checklist

This checklist is to be completed annually, or as needed in the interim, for each of Connection Work's programs to ensure the ongoing safety, relevance, and currency of our programs.

Step 1: Strategic Alignment Check

Does the program still reflect who we are?

- ☐ Does the program align with our vision of culturally safe, inclusive, community-led responses?
- ☐ Does the program support our mission to build safer systems and stronger communities through culturally led education?
- ☐ Are the program's aims and delivery methods consistent with our organisational values (Connection, Cultural Leadership, Collective Healing, Adaptability, Empowerment through Education)?
- ☐ Is the program still serving the communities and audiences it was designed for?

Step 2: Feedback and Data Review

What have we heard? What do we know?

- ☐ Review all participant feedback collected over the past 12 months
- ☐ Review any host organisation or stakeholder feedback
- ☐ Review facilitator reflections and debriefs
- ☐ Review feedback received via the website, email, or in person
- ☐ Identify common themes (e.g., strengths, concerns, requests, language issues)

Step 3: Content and Materials Review

Is everything current and culturally safe?

- ☐ Review program workbooks, slides, and handouts for:
 - o Cultural safety
 - o Language clarity and tone
 - o Accuracy of statistics and references
 - o Updated sector best practice
- ☐ Ensure crisis resource lists are up to date

- ☐ Confirm key teaching messages and graphics are understood and relevant

Step 4: Advisory and Staff Review

What do our team and advisors say?

- ☐ Conduct a program review meeting with internal staff
- ☐ Invite feedback and discussion from active facilitators
- ☐ Meet with the cultural advisory group for reflection and recommendations
- ☐ Invite community input from Elders or partners

Step 5: Research and Partnership Integration

What does the latest evidence say?

- ☐ Review any relevant insights from research partners
- ☐ Check for updates in sector policy or national strategy that affect program direction
- ☐ Integrate findings from emerging research or partner evaluations

Step 6: Actions and Communication

What will we change and who needs to know?

- ☐ Document changes to program content, delivery, or facilitation protocols
- ☐ Update facilitator packs and delivery instructions
- ☐ Communicate key updates to:
 - o Facilitators
 - o Host organisations
 - o Relevant contributors (when applicable)

Step 7: Documentation

- ☐ Write a program review summary, following the points outlined in this checklist
- ☐ File all updated resources and documentation in appropriate drive
- ☐ Schedule next review

Safe Language Commitment

Why Safe Language Matters

At Connection Works, we believe that language is more than just words — it carries power, meaning, and cultural significance. The way we speak about suicide, mental health, trauma, and lived experience can either promote healing and inclusion or reinforce harm and stigma. That's why we are committed to using **safe, respectful, and culturally appropriate language** across all our programs, communications, and interactions.

This commitment reflects our broader values of cultural leadership, dignity, and connection. We recognise that language evolves, and we stay open to learning, adapting, and engaging with new best practices to ensure our work remains aligned with community expectations and cultural safety principles.

Staff Responsibilities

All Connection Works staff, contractors, and collaborators must engage with and uphold safe language practices in line with our **Safe Language Policy**. This includes:

- Actively reviewing all required safe language resources listed below;
- Incorporating safe language into written, spoken, and digital communication;
- Staying up to date with any changes to our language standards;
- Modelling safe language when representing Connection Works publicly or internally.

Required Reading List

All team members are required to review the following resources in full before signing the Safe Language Commitment. These foundational documents outline best-practice language standards for our core program areas:

Mental Health and Suicide Safe Language

- ❑ *Recovery Oriented Language Guide* – Mental Health Coordinating Council
- ❑ *Trauma-Informed Language Tips* – Mental Health Coordinating Council

- ☐ *A Guide to Culturally Safe Practice in Mental Health* – Mental Health Coordinating Council
- ☐ *Our Words Matter: Guidelines for Language Use* – Mindframe

Culturally Safe Language

- ☐ *Koorified: Aboriginal Communication and Language* – VACCHO and La Trobe University
- ☐ *Communicating Positively: A Guide to Appropriate Aboriginal Terminology* – NSW Health
- ☐ *Glossary of Healing Terms* – The Healing Foundation

Lived and Living Experience of Suicide

- ☐ *Lived Experience of Suicide Language and Imagery Guide* – Roses in the Ocean

Please note: This list may be updated periodically based on sector standards or newly available best practice. If changes occur, all staff will be required to review new resources and submit updated acknowledgements within 30 days of being notified.

Acknowledgement and Signature

I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and commit to upholding the safe language practices outlined in the resources above and as outlined in Connection Works' Safe Language Policy. I understand the importance of language in creating safety, dignity, and cultural respect for all participants and communities engaged with Connection Works.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

☐

Connection Works Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Group

The Connection Works Advisory Group exists to guide, strengthen, and inform the work of Connection Works by sharing insights grounded in personal experience and cultural wisdom. This includes experiences of suicide, suicide prevention, mental health challenges, healing, and community leadership—particularly within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The group helps ensure that programs, training, and resources are respectful, relevant, culturally safe, and genuinely connected to the realities of the people they are designed to serve.

Role of Members

As a member of this group, you may be asked to:

- Give feedback on draft program materials, language, or delivery methods
- Offer advice about how our work reflects community needs and lived experience
- Identify potential risks, gaps, or improvements
- Help us strengthen the cultural safety and real-world relevance of what we deliver

You're not expected to share personal stories unless you want to. Your lived or professional insights are valued.

Meetings and Communication

- Meetings will be held as agreed
- You can attend in person or online
- Meeting dates, times, and agendas will be shared in advance
- You'll receive a short summary of the meeting afterwards
- Participation is always voluntary—you can skip a session or leave the group at any time

Meetings will be run in a respectful, culturally safe, and inclusive way. We aim to make space for everyone's voice and to allow time for reflection when needed.

Wellbeing and Support

Connection Works recognises that some topics we discuss may be sensitive. To support your wellbeing:

- We offer optional check-ins before and after meetings
- We can connect you with counselling or wellbeing support via our EAP provider
- We'll always protect your privacy, and anything you share will remain confidential, unless agreed otherwise

Respect and Inclusion

- Every member is expected to listen with care and speak with respect
- We don't all have the same story – diverse views and experiences are welcomed
- Unsafe or disrespectful behaviour is not acceptable and may result in removal from the group

Payment and Reimbursement

- We value your time and insight. Members will receive a sitting fee, gift card, or similar token of appreciation for each meeting
- Travel costs (if any) will be reimbursed by Connection Works, where approved in advance

Staying Involved

- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every year, or sooner as needed
- We'll let you know if anything about the group changes
- Your feedback about how the group works is always welcome

Training Venue Checklist

Safety & Compliance

- ☐ Venue has clearly marked fire exits and evacuation plans
- ☐ Working smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and/or fire blankets are present
- ☐ First aid kit is available onsite, and staff know where it is
- ☐ Venue is compliant with public health and safety regulations
- ☐ Emergency contacts (venue manager, ambulance, etc.) are easily accessible

Accessibility

- ☐ Venue is wheelchair accessible, including ramps, doors, and restrooms
- ☐ Accessible toilets are available and clean
- ☐ Parking is available onsite or nearby (including accessible parking)
- ☐ Venue entrance is clearly signed and easy to locate
- ☐ Public transport access (where applicable) is suitable for participants

Comfort & Facilities

- ☐ Adequate seating for all participants, including options for Elders or those needing extra support
- ☐ Heating/cooling/ventilation is appropriate for the local climate and season
- ☐ Good lighting (natural and artificial) to support a comfortable learning environment
- ☐ Clean and functioning bathroom facilities
- ☐ Access to kitchen, tea/coffee, or catering options if meals are being provided
- ☐ Quiet space available for participants needing a break (optional but ideal)

Technology & Learning Aids

- ☐ Availability of a projector/screen/monitor if required
- ☐ Adequate power points for trainers' and participants' use
- ☐ Reliable Wi-Fi or mobile reception (if needed for facilitation)
- ☐ Whiteboard/flipchart and markers available
- ☐ Venue is not overly noisy or echoey—acoustics support group learning

Cultural Safety

- ☐ Venue is culturally appropriate (e.g. no alcohol signage, respectful setting)
- ☐ Option to deliver on Country if culturally significant and preferred by the community
- ☐ Venue layout allows for yarning circle or group discussion setup
- ☐ Opportunity to acknowledge local Elders or protocols for use of space
- ☐ Visibility of cultural materials or Indigenous artwork is appropriate and respectful

Practical Considerations

- ☐ Venue costs are within budget and confirmed in writing
- ☐ Booking and cancellation terms are clear
- ☐ Space is available for full duration of training plus set-up/pack-down time
- ☐ Venue is secure (lockable space for materials if needed)
- ☐ Local contacts or site managers are responsive and helpful