

Indigenous COVID-19 resource

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As the COVID-19 pandemic increased concerns about the disruption to Aboriginal students' studies, Indigenous educators developed an online resource for teachers to help re-engage Aboriginal students with school.

Want to learn why the native cherry tree is a good metaphor for reconciliation? Or how to make a didgeridoo at home? These are just some of the engaging topics covered in the Hunter and Central Coast Aboriginal Education Resource, a [YouTube channel](#) that includes video content and complementary lesson outlines to support students, family and community members in the pursuit of quality education in the regions.

Born out of concerns that COVID-19 restrictions and remote learning could harm learning outcomes for Indigenous children across the Hunter and Central Coast, the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership and the Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle, in conjunction with the Hunter and Central Coast Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and the local Indigenous community, have created the resources.



University of Newcastle Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership Nathan Towney said that with alarming statistics surfacing, such as 12,000 students unlikely to return to school to complete their HSC (according to the NSW Education Standards Authority), the resources are crucial for ensuring teachers are well equipped to engage children in their schooling.

The videos include messages from elders and cover topics including art, wellbeing, the environment, sharing stories, dancing and making and playing the didgeridoo.

"This resource will allow our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to connect with local community members in a series of hands-on activities," he said.

"It is an important way that our schools can connect with students and families through these unprecedented times.

"As a teacher, I am very excited to launch this program which will hopefully have an impact on student engagement and retention across the Hunter and Central Coast."