

EREA Flexible Schools Announces Inaugural Director of First Nations Education, Waanyi-Gangalidda and Wankamadla woman Liz Kupsch

EREA Flexible Schools, the largest national network of alternative schools in Australia, has strengthened its leadership team with the appointment of Waanyi-Gangalidda and Wankamadla woman, Elizabeth (Liz) Kupsch, as its inaugural Director of First Nations Education.

With qualifications in both education and Indigenous leadership, Liz brings deep knowledge, skills and understandings of how our First Nations students experience education and how systems can and have enhanced or inhibited their life outcomes. Liz has previously held several senior leadership positions with organisations such as Reconciliation Australia, Brisbane Catholic Education, Stronger Smarter Institute, CSIRO and Education Queensland.

A newly created role, the Director of First Nations Education will provide strategic leadership, oversight and advice through building relationships with First Nations peoples, communities, and stakeholders. As part of the National Leadership Team, Liz will bring a First Nations voice to all organisational decisions and support the implementation of the organisation's First Nations Education Framework, while working to foster cultural change and continuous improvement.

EREA Flexible Schools CEO, Dr Matt Hawkins, said he was confident Liz would make significant contributions not only to Flexis as an organisation, but also to First Nations education more broadly: "I am thrilled to welcome Liz to the Flexi community. This role is something that we have intentionally devoted a great deal of time and resources to, listening to our First Nations staff and communities to ensure an authentic and meaningful process in which First Nations people have a significant voice within our organisation.

"This role is profoundly important to Flexis – over 30% of our young people identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and we have a long history of being influenced by and integrating Indigenous perspectives, cultures and histories into our approach to education and learning. I am confident Liz's lived experience and proven commitment to supporting and encouraging First Nations students will be a huge asset to the Flexi community," he said.

Liz Kupsch said she was looking forward to the challenge in what is a pivotal time for our nation: "We know that as a country we need to do better in creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment for our young people to thrive. For me, this role is about empowering our educators to lead with strength-based approaches while fostering high expectations relationships to deliver a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment that is fully inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

"This process starts by listening to and amplifying First Nations voices and implementing their ideas around truth-telling and embedding those into the fabric of what we teach at Flexis. If we do this, we not only can create an environment where our First Nations young people can thrive both inside and outside of our school gates, but we build a national Australian story that includes the oldest continuous living culture on the planet."

For more information about EREA Flexible Schools, head to www.ereafsn.edu.au.

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