

# Revitalising First Nations languages and communities

A trailblazer in reviving and teaching First Nations languages, Aunty Elizabeth Wright, is transforming communities through connection to culture. As TAFE NSW's first teacher of Aboriginal Languages and Culture, her Wiradjuri studies at Charles Sturt have helped shape the vibrant legacy of language and culture she is creating.

"The whole journey was eye-opening, a wonderful experience," she recalls. "It really empowered us to upskill and take our programs to the next level."

A proud Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Wayilwan woman and Elder, Aunty Beth describes teaching language as her "dreaming". Fluent in seven Aboriginal languages and dialects – including her mother tongues, Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay – she joined Dubbo TAFE in 2010. She now teaches students in 15 northwest NSW communities, plus many more online worldwide. She has also built innovative learning programs, including a national and online course to preserve the Wiradjuri language, and delivered programs in correctional and juvenile justice centres.

By reducing barriers to education, training and employment for Aboriginal peoples and helping them reconnect with identity and culture, Aunty Beth is building vital pathways to stronger, healthier communities.

"Language reignites identity, our belonging to place and community. It is the spirit, the soul, the heart of who we are."

Aunty Beth was a driving force in reviving the once-lost language of Wayilwan, the language of her father. She expertly navigated cultural protocols and worked tirelessly to unearth historical recordings and document words, developing educational courses to preserve and share the language for generations to come. Through her efforts, Wayilwan is now being spoken in Warren for the first time since the 1960s, and members of the newly formed Wayilwan Youth Choir proudly sing in their ancestral language.

"To see those boys and girls up there singing the songs from the soul, no words on paper... it's amazing. I'm incredibly proud."

In recognition of her extraordinary contribution to reinvigorating Aboriginal languages and communities, Aunty Beth was awarded the Public Service Medal in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours and the TAFE NSW Gili Award in 2018. A powerful catalyst for positive change, she is quietly laying the foundation for a brighter tomorrow for First Nations people and our society as a whole.



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**Aunty Elizabeth Wright**  
Graduate Certificate in Wiradjuri Language, Culture and Heritage, 2018.