

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BATHURST ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION STRATEGIC DIRECTION

* Within the context of this document the word Aboriginal encompasses both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Vision Statement

Animated by a spirituality of encounter with strong cultural competence, our schools will support students and communities to be emboldened with the knowledge, strength and wisdom inherent in the richness of Aboriginal story.

Catholic school communities within the diocese of Bathurst continue to be committed to the national efforts to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational outcomes. This Strategic Direction document will build on the actions underway in pursuing the priorities outlined in the Diocesan 2013-2015 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan.

The working party charged with the development of this plan has drawn inspiration from Pope Francis' call for us to be animated by a spirituality of encounter, challenging educators to proclaim the equal dignity imbued in each and every person who is the image and likeness of God. The emphasis on strengthening the cultural competence of staff within our schools is a key strategy emanating from a spirituality of encounter. School communities strengthening their engagement with their local Aboriginal community will be one of the visible signs of their commitment to the priorities within this plan.

In endorsing the strategies which have been devised in relation to each of the priority areas which have been drawn from the National Plan, I thank the members of the working party for their commitment, drive and wisdom. I look forward to the implementation of the plan and the positive impact it will have on the educational outcomes of our Aboriginal students and on the knowledge and understanding of all learners within our school communities, in regard to Aboriginal histories and cultures. May we indeed be emboldened with the knowledge, strength and wisdom inherent in the richness of Aboriginal story.

Mrs Jenny Allen
Executive Director of Schools

Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development

Action is taken to ensure children and young people are taught by skilled educators who are culturally competent in the local context. Providers, including principals, set high expectations for learning that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

Further support for the engagement of children, young people and their families is provided by building a well-qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workforce.

1. Identify and promote teacher professional learning that builds capacity to provide culturally inclusive curricular and culturally responsive pedagogies.
2. Set and articulate high expectations of learning that incorporates Aboriginal perspectives for all Aboriginal students.
3. Promote and implement professional learning that builds staff cultural competence in the local context.
4. Determine strategies to support Aboriginal Educators (AEs) successful transition from completion of degree to teaching in the diocese.

Culture and Identity

Through the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, education sectors acknowledge, respect and reflect the histories, values, languages and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

All Australian children and young people have the opportunity to learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1. Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are embedded and integrated across all KLAs.
2. Foster collaboration in promoting learning that respects and reflects Aboriginal histories, values, languages, spirituality and cultures in the delivery of content across the curriculum.
3. Support schools to partner with their local Aboriginal community to develop a set of protocols to ensure respectful relationships.
4. Promote and implement professional learning that builds staff confidence in delivering respectful cultural content.

Partnerships

Quality partnerships are encouraged between education sectors and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other stakeholders.

These partnerships are characterised by listening and responding, strong accountability and active engagement, collaborative information sharing and informed decision making.

1. Support schools to develop partnerships that promote shared ownership of student achievement between schools, parents and community.
2. Further develop and disseminate practices to support enhanced participation of Aboriginal communities in the Catholic life of school and parish communities.
3. Support schools to empower students to actively engage within and beyond their Aboriginal community.

Attendance

Engaging with learning is fundamental in helping all children acquire the skills they need for life. Schools and services work with families and communities on strategies to address barriers to school attendance.

1. Develop school based strategies, to maintain and improve school attendance, monitoring and promptly reporting on student non-attendance.
2. Partner with families and communities to build support networks for positively promoting school attendance.
3. Liaise with agencies that are intentional about improving Aboriginal students' attendance.

Transition Points Including Pathways To Post-School Options and School and Child Readiness

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are supported at critical stages of their education to improve engagement, retention and attainment and develop the skills to participate fully in schooling, society and work. Schools work with families and communities to set a strong foundation for early learning, including a child's transition to school.

1. Develop a Diocesan framework that identifies critical educational transition points and map suggested support at each of those points.
2. Disseminate secondary Indigenous Pathways Advisor network resources to schools to support students in meaningful school based and post school options.

Literacy and Numeracy

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's English literacy and numeracy proficiencies are developed by applying proven, culturally inclusive, responsive and personalised approaches to learning, such as English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) in order to improve their educational attainment, life choices and options.

1. Analyse data of Aboriginal student performance to aid informed strategic planning.
2. Build the capacity of AEs and teachers to share evidence based analysis of Aboriginal student's performance to aid achievement and growth in Literacy and Numeracy.

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