



## **Queensland Catholic Education Commission Secretariat**

### **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan**

**September 2021- September 2023**

#### **Our vision for reconciliation**

Our vision for reconciliation is for everyone to be treated with equal respect and dignity and for the wisdom of our First Nations' Peoples to be acknowledged and embraced. QCEC is committed to the achievement of authentic reconciliation, justice, equity and healing.

#### **Our business**

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) is committed to reconciliation and improving the learning and life outcomes of all young people by:

- Supporting our Catholic School Authorities so they can continue to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to have access to cultural, spiritual and leadership programs.
- Advocating the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within Catholic schools with respect to education and related policy issues.
- Ensuring that in our work the cultural rights, practices, high expectations, hopes and dreams of parents and carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and children are always respected.

QCEC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Position Statement outlines how, as a broader community, we are committed to reconciliation and improving the learning and life outcomes of Australia's First Nations' Peoples, advocating that:

- All school communities are committed to reconciliation, cultural safety, respect and responsiveness, and transforming leadership
- Reconciliation and respectful relations between all Australians are based on principles of personal dignity, social justice and equity.

We encourage our Catholic School Authorities to have positive and high expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to continue to enhance practices and beliefs about what students can achieve. Underachievement is not acceptable in the pursuit of solutions to complex scenarios. We aim to promote long-term sustainable change and access to adequate funding to provide expertise and resources to support our Catholic School Authorities and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their care.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) is the peak strategic body with certain state-wide responsibilities for Catholic education in Queensland. It represents 22 Catholic School Authorities which operate a total of 309 Catholic schools educating more than 147,000 students in Queensland, approximately 7,800 of whom identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. As of August 2021, 362 employees (279.4 FTE) of Queensland Catholic School Authorities identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Eight Catholic schools in Queensland have a majority of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students, with, for example, St Michael's School on Palm Island and St Teresa's College, Abergowrie being comprised of 100% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students. The QCEC Secretariat is located at Penola Place, Level 3/143 Edward Street, Brisbane QLD 4000.

Catholic education in Queensland is striving to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools. Queensland Catholic School Authorities actively contribute to the implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy. Catholic education in Queensland is also committed to bringing to life the Alice Springs (Maparntwe) Declaration, "Through education, we are committed to ensuring that all students learn about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to seeing all young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples thrive in their education and all facets of life." (Education Council, 2019, p. 3)

Catholic education in Queensland is committed to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, guided by the principles of personal dignity, social justice and equity. We take as inspiration the instructions on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday 2019, "We can walk alongside in loving support but avoid any temptation to come in with quick solutions imposed from outside." (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2019).

QCEC understands that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people possess a "deep rooted sacred spirituality ...that continues to encompass the richness and depth of the Sacredness of Spirituality of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the traditions of the Catholic Church." (Aunty Joan Hendriks, 2006).

QCEC does not operate any schools but rather works with our 22 Catholic School Authorities to influence, support and advance Queensland Catholic education. The QCEC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Network comprises representatives from Queensland Catholic School Authorities which have primary responsibility for supporting all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families. They strive to support these students and families with the schooling journey and to share and promote the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the benefit of all.

QCEC is committed to true reconciliation and has made submissions to the Queensland Government in support of a treaty recognising and celebrating the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in our past, present and future. The QCEC Secretariat has also established productive and mutually supportive relationships with the mayors of remote and discrete communities throughout Queensland. These relationships are critical to further strengthening our shared partnership and advocacy

efforts to ensure all young people are supported to access high quality education and realise their potential. In working with the local communities to facilitate access to Catholic boarding schools, QCEC works cooperatively with Transition Support Services and is a member of the Transition Initiatives Governance Group.

QCEC has also made submissions to national bodies such as the Indigenous Education Boarding Australia in support of an Indigenous Boarding Standard, recognising the importance of boarding schools in meeting the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarders. QCEC has also contributed to a range of national submissions, led by the National Catholic Education Commission, in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families' equitable access to high quality education. Furthermore, QCEC continues to promote the important place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture in the Australian Curriculum.

To ensure we have an informed and contemporary approach to our efforts, QCEC encourages national and international research into educational outcomes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to inform best practice and culturally safe practices across Catholic School Authorities.

The Secretariat of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission is committed to working with Queensland Catholic School Authorities and in its own work to promote true and lasting reconciliation.

This Reconciliation Action Plan has been developed following advice from, and consultation with, the QCEC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education network, Ms Cynthia Rowan and Mr Mick Gooda.

### **Message from the Executive Director**

This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) reflects the Secretariat's commitment to supporting a climate in its workplace and, by supporting Catholic School Authorities, in Catholic schools across Queensland. This ensures all people are recognised as gifts from God. It acknowledges the failings of the past and looks forward in hope to a time of genuine and lasting reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Only through a commitment to genuine reconciliation, can any institution be authentically Catholic. It is when we honestly see things from another's perspective that we encounter Christ, who came to call everyone to life in all its abundance (John 10:10).

At the heart of all our work is supporting the holistic education of all young people, whatever their cultural background, within our Catholic faith tradition. Our work supports Catholic schools to help their students achieve the best possible learning outcomes and to grow to be resilient individuals, respectful of all others, able to shape their own futures, build meaningful lives and contribute to their communities, wherever they might be in Queensland.

QCEC is committed to supporting Catholic School Authorities in endeavouring to ensure that their schools are welcoming communities that embrace the diversity of all. We strive to honour the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our society. This Reconciliation Action Plan articulates our intention to be proactive on the road to reconciliation.

Our challenge now is to implement this plan authentically and with genuine commitment.

Dr Lee-Anne Perry AM

## **OUR RAP**

QCEC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Australia. We respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and acknowledge the unique contribution to the life of this country made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Through the lenses of Respect, Relationships and Opportunities, QCEC strives to support everyone, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff members to build cultural safety across the organisation, and to respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our practice.

It is the goal of the QCEC Innovate RAP, as an overarching plan, to determine actions to be carried out by the Secretariat of QCEC to increase commitment to reconciliation. QCEC to supports Catholic School Authorities to promote and engage with reconciliation through the Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education RAP process. This process, designed by Reconciliation Australia, specifically supports schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

Reconciliation is everyone's business and everyone's right, so that a better Australia is created for all.

## **QCEC SECRETARIAT RAP WORKING COMMITTEE**

The QCEC Secretariat RAP Working Committee (RWC) is inclusive of gender diversity and comprises both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. It will support the development of the QCEC Secretariat Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. Internally the RAP is championed by the Director - Education. The RWC is compromised of the following staff:

- Director - Education
- Principal Policy Advisor
- Manager Workplace Relations
- Manager Capital Programs
- Education Officer responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
- Education Officer responsible for Faith and Formation
- Pro Vice Chancellor (Indigenous), Griffith University

QCEC are particularly pleased to have the external services of Professor Cindy Shannon who is a descendent of the Ngugi people and has a strong connection to Queensland Catholic sector schools.



## RELATIONSHIPS

We will continue to develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and commit to building knowledge and understanding of First Nations deep histories and cultures.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	i. Organise at least one internal event for, NRW each year.	May 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	ii. Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	iii. RAP Working Committee members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	iv. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023	Executive Director
	v. Register all NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	27 May - 3 June 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	vi. Provide QCEC representation at an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2022, 2023	Executive Director
2. Establish and maintain mutually	i. Develop and implement an engagement plan to	November 2022	RWC Chair

beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other stakeholders including regular meetings of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Network with a view to identifying and advancing strategic directions pertaining to educational outcomes for First Nations students, as measured against the Closing the Gap parameters. These meetings are to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.		
	ii. Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding protocols for future engagement in QCEC events, where appropriate.	February 2022	RWC Chair
	iii. Build relationships for reconciliation with QCEC partners, including Traditional Custodians where our office is located.	February 2022	Executive Director & RWC Chair
3. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our organisation.	i. Promote the QCEC Secretariat RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	September 2021	RWC Chair & Communications and Marketing Manager
	ii. Implement strategies to engage our staff in reconciliation.	September 2021	RWC Chair
	iii. Explore opportunities to positively influence our external	February 2022	Director-Education & RWC Chair

		stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.		
	iv.	Collaborate with RAP and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	September 2022	RWC Chair
	v.	Promote and communicate our commitment to reconciliation publically through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.	September 2021	Communications and Marketing Manager
	vi.	Secretariat to include a focus on reconciliation in a staff meeting at least annually.	June 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	vii.	Ensure all Secretariat formation resources and programs reflect the QCEC vision for reconciliation.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer & Director - Education
	viii.	Review QCEC publications and update where necessary to reflect the vision for reconciliation.	September 2021	Communications and Marketing Manager
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	i.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	ii.	Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	iii.	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer

	and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.		
	iv. Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer





## RESPECT

Respect is fundamental to our reconciliation pathways and a fundamental teaching of the Catholic faith. Respect is a key factor in developing positive relationships and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We will ensure that we build awareness, understanding and respect with regards to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and Peoples, across the Secretariat, by embracing the histories, knowledge and lessons they share.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days and events of significance.	i. Support the annual ACU Close the Gap event.	July 2022	Director - Education
	ii. Organise at least one internal event for the Anniversary of the Apology.	February 2022	RWC Chair
	iii. Provide QCEC representation at an external Anniversary of the Apology event.	February 2022	Executive Director
	iv. Support the Queensland Catholic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education conference.	September 2021 until conference in 2022 (ongoing action)	Director - Education
	v. Review and update the inclusion of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events in the QCEC calendar.	December 2021	Director - Education
6. Increase understanding, value and	i. Provide an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural	February 2022	Director – Education

recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.		awareness program for our staff.		
	ii.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	February 2022	Executive Director
	iii.	Consult local Traditional Custodians and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	February 2022	Director- Education & RWC Chair
	iv.	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	February 2022	RWC Chair
	v.	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Committee members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	February 2022	Executive Director
	vi.	Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness as a part of the induction suite.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	i.	Continue to implement a protocol for Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings and display prominently in each meeting room and make available through the intranet.	September 2021	RWC Chair
	ii.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind	September 2021	RWC Chair

		cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.		
	iii.	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	September 2021	RWC Chair
	iv.	Ensure all staff apply the QCEC Secretariat meeting protocols when chairing formal meetings or presenting on behalf of QCEC.	September 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	v.	Invite a local Traditional Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	February 2022	Director - Education
	vi.	Ensure that a Welcome or Acknowledgment of Country is conducted at the annual whole of staff development day.	February 2022	Director - Education
	vii.	Investigate other ways to acknowledge country outside of meetings – intranet, website and email signatures.	September 2021	Communications and Marketing Manager
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by	i.	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no unintended barriers to staff taking cultural leave to participate in	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer

celebrating NAIDOC Week.	NAIDOC Week celebrations.		
	ii. RAP Working Committee to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	iii. Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	July 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	iv. Encourage all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week and/or other culturally significant events.	July 2022, 2023	Executive Director
9. Ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Position Statement is consistent with the QCEC RAP.	i. Review the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Position Statement and update it if necessary.	September 2021	RWC Chair
10. Build connections with heritage of place at QCEC office.	i. Display plaques and signs acknowledging local Traditional Custodians.	September 2021	Communications and Marketing Manager
	ii. Secure, promote and display appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural art and icons.	February 2022	Chief Operating Officer
	iii. Research and share the history and heritage of the site of QCEC office.	December 2022	RWC Chair
12. Embed First Nations' spiritualities into a contemporary understanding of	i. Promote an understanding of First Nations' spiritualities through both the Faith, Formation and	July 2022	Education Officers responsible for Faith, Formation and RE and Aboriginal and

Catholic education.	RE Network and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Network.		Torres Strait Islander Networks
	ii. Promote an understanding of First Nations' spiritualities through Education Update.	July 2022	RWC Chair



## OPPORTUNITIES

Fostering equal and equitable opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is essential to realising reconciliation. Our aim is to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to advocate for equality of employment, community engagement and building business capability.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
13. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	i. Maintain accurate records on numbers of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (including specific roles) at QCEC.	December 2021	Chief Financial Officer
	ii. Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	August 2023	Executive Director
	iii. Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	iv. Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	v. Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on employment strategies, including professional development.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	vi. Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer

	vii.	Include in all job advertisements, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply.'	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	viii.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2022	Chief Operating Officer
14. Promote Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program to staff and external stakeholders.	i.	Promote Reconciliation Australia's <i>Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education</i> program to all Catholic School Authorities through regular QCEC communications with Catholic School Authorities.	February 2022	RWC Chair
	ii.	Help to promote and encourage CSAs who have shown exceptional commitment to reconciliation to apply for the Narragunnawali Awards.	February 2022	RWC Chair
	iii.	Encourage staff to engage with the professional learning (including webinar) resources available via Reconciliation Australia's <i>Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education</i> online platform.	27 May – 3 June 2022	RWC Chair
	iv.	Encourage CSAs to sign up to the Narragunnawali News mailing list.	February 2022	RWC Chair
	v.	Host appropriate links to Reconciliation Australia's <i>Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education</i> platform on the QCEC website.	February 2022	Communications and Marketing Manager
15. Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievements.	i.	Promote the Aunty Joan Hendriks Reconciliation Award in Catholic Education Week.	May 2022	Communications and Marketing Manager
16. Provide leadership opportunities for staff.	i.	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in relevant conferences, formation and leadership opportunities	July 2022	Executive Director

	relevant to their role and performance goals.		
	ii. Support all staff to participate in relevant conferences, formation and leadership opportunities that may increase cultural competency.	July 2022	Executive Director
	iii. Support and encourage opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who have participated in significant leadership/development experiences to share their learnings with their communities and any staff who have participated in cultural competency experiences to share their learnings with their colleagues.	July 2022	Executive Director
17. Encourage and support Queensland Catholic School Authorities to further embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into teaching and learning programs.	i. Promote relevant professional development for educators to grow in their understandings of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.	July 2022	Executive Director
18. Provide resources and advice based on national and international research.	i. Provide links to national and international research into educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to inform best practice and culturally safe practices across Catholic School Authorities.	September 2021	Education Officer responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
19. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	ii. Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	August 2023	Chief Operating Officer & Chief Financial Officer
	iii. Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	iv. Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement	August 2023	Chief Operating Officer



	of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.		
	v. Review and update procurement practices to ensure there are no barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	August 2023	Chief Operating Officer
	vi. Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	August 2023	Chief Operating Officer



## GOVERNANCE, TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
20. RAP Working Committee (RWC) actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	i. RWC to oversee the development and implementation of the RAP.	September 2021	RWC Chair
	ii. Review and monitor the RWG to ensure it is governing the RAP implementation effectively.	September 2021	Executive Director
	iii. Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are represented on the RWC.	September 2021	RWC Chair
	iv. RWC to meet at least two times per year to monitor and report on the RAP implementation.	November 2021; May 2022	RWC Chair
	v. RWC to report to Executive Director twice a year to oversee progress for the implementation of the RAP.	December 2021; June 2022	Executive Director
	vi. Review and update the Terms of Reference for the RWC.	September 2021	RWC Chair
22. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	i. Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2021	RWC Chair
	ii. Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	February 2022	Executive Director
	iii. Develop and implement systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.	September 2021	RWC Chair

	iv. Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	September 2022	Director Education
	v. Report through regular Secretariat communications including the Education Update and Commission Communique.	July 2022	RWC Chair
23. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	i. Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	September 2022, 2023	RWC Chair
	ii. Investigate participation in the RAP Barometer.	May 2022	RWC Chair
	iii. Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	July 2022	RWC Chair
	iv. Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	August 2022	Executive Director
24. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	i. Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	January 2023	RWC Chair
	ii. Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback.	September 2023	RWC Chair
	iii. Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2023	RWC Chair

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#### Acknowledgements:

QCEC would like to acknowledge the inspiration and help from the Reconciliation Action Plans of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) and Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) in the construction of this Reconciliation Action Plan.