Policy Statement

For Brisbane Catholic Education Schools

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Education

Staff
All staff within the school will:

• seek to develop authentic relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents and community;

• develop partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers.

Professional Development
Each school community will implement this policy through:

• provision of appropriate professional development in cross cultural pedagogy for all staff;

• provision of appropriate professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies;

• support for the implementation of reconciliation strategies.

References


Pope John Paul II. (November 1986). Address to the Aboriginal People of Australia, Alice Springs.

For more information please contact the Catholic Education Council

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The Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to achieving the educational vision of the Church in the Archdiocese through the regular criteria based review of the location and nature of Catholic schools.

INTRODUCTION
Catholic schools respect and affirm the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as being the original inhabitants of this country. In addressing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and students to receive quality education in our Catholic schools.

It continues a commitment of the Church in Australia bequeathed by the late Pope John Paul II who came to Australia in 1986 and told our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brother and sisters:

‘Your “Dreaming”, which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, is your only way of touching the mystery of God’s Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and held onto it in your lives.’ (N: 2)

Through this policy our acknowledgement, respect and understanding of the struggle of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters with unjust policies and structures will continue as we, the Church:

‘…support the cause of all Indigenous peoples who seek a just and equitable recognition of their identity and their rights.’ (Ecclesia in Oceania, 2001 N:100)

Together we will continue to educate our students about the dignity of each and every person in Jesus Christ and the ancient and rich history and culture of the original inhabitants of this beautiful land and of their situation today.

I ask that Catholic school communities reflect upon and promote this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Education Policy and ensure that all in their communities are aware of the policy and procedures to progress this important partnership. I call staff to collaboratively develop initiatives and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families to ensure equitable educational outcomes. This is our commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within this Archdiocese.

I invite each school community to promote this policy and to further the educational mission of the Church in the Archdiocese.

Sincerely in Christ

Most Rev John Bathersby DD
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE
APRIL 2006