

Staff

All staff within the school will:

- seek to develop authentic relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents and community⁵
- develop partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers.⁶

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.

⁵ Successful Learning in the Early Years of Schooling –The Indigenous Parent Factor

⁶ A process that encourages targeted networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Government/Community agencies (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, housing, resource centres, legal aid and child care) which will assist with Indigenous learners to meet their maximum potential.

References

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National Catholic Education Commission. (1998). *Educating for Justice, Trust and Reconciliation – A new partnership with Indigenous peoples of Australia*. NCEC. Brisbane.

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



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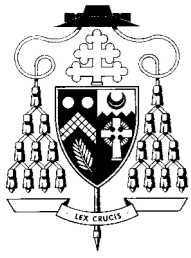
**ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION COUNCIL**

POLICY STATEMENT

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Catholic Education**

**FOR BRISBANE CATHOLIC
EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

MAY 2006



Foreward

This policy statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education reflects the ongoing commitment of Catholic education to a process of reconciliation through education with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

It builds on existing strategies such as the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre, Ngutana-Lui at Inala (opened in 1988), the 'Reconciliation Through Education' gathering (1997) at Suncorp Stadium and the ongoing support given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families 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 hold 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

POLICY

The Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to achieving the educational vision of 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 peoples¹ as being the original inhabitants of this country. In addressing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at Alice Springs in 1986, Pope John Paul II said:

"You are Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others".

In responding to this challenge, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane have an enduring commitment to reconciliation² with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through education, and through the encouragement of their valued involvement in the life of the Church through our school communities.

RATIONALE

This policy statement affirms and supports this ongoing commitment and seeks to provide guidelines for its implementation.

It also affirms the strong commitment of many generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to living the Gospel message in the Catholic tradition.

"We challenge those we educate to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities"

(Vision Statement for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2004)

CONSEQUENCES

Accountability

Parish and Archdiocesan Catholic schools will:

- promote equitable access to quality education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

through the provision of extra resources to achieve equal outcomes

- develop and implement procedures and protocols³ that support the implementation of reconciliation through education
- observe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols in relation to celebrations such as Journey of Healing (Sorry Day),⁴ Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and Aboriginal Children's Day
- engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parent bodies in policy and decision making at the local level
- monitor, review and report on the implementation of the policy in their school renewal and quality assurance processes
- comply with the reporting and procedural requirements of government agencies.

Curriculum

Catholic schools will engage with curriculum that promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives through:

- acknowledging and embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, spiritual values and traditions
- integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will experience:

- culturally inclusive education
- affirmation and valuing of their identity and their particular relationship with land, sea, sky and animals
- focused support in the areas of literacy and numeracy
- focused support in the area of vocational education and further learning.

¹ An Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander is a person who identifies as such and is accepted as such by the community in which she or he lives or has lived. National Report on Schooling in Australia (1994)

² A process which calls for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to work together with mutual respect to listen, to hear and to heal past wrongs'. (National Catholic Education Commission)

³ Protocols and Guidelines Document – for the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Perspective in Brisbane Archdiocesan Schools and College.

⁴ Sorry does not have the same meaning to Indigenous people as non-Indigenous people. Its meaning is more literal – 'it's a time of sorrow'; 'a time for reflection'; or 'there is sorry time ahead' Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schooling in the Archdiocese of Brisbane 2002-2006