

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION

Implementation Plan
2021 - 2025



Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Armidale

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians, past and present of this land of the Aniwana, Banbai, Dunghatte, Jukambal, Kambawal, Weraera, Kamilaroi, Ngoogabrul and Gumbaynggir as acknowledged by Armidale Lands Council, people who long before us lived, loved and raised their children on this land. We also acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our community and acknowledge their deep physical and spiritual connections to the land.

PREAMBLE

This Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Implementation Plan seeks to action the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy 2016 in the Catholic Diocese of Armidale. In developing this Plan, a range of other data, policies and plans have been considered including:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 (Australian Government Education Council)
- Catholic Schools Office Armidale and Dare to Lead: Collegial Snapshot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, November 9 – 13 2009
- Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, December 2019
- Armidale Diocesan 'WII GAAY' (Clever Child) Program Report by Dr James Woolford, January 2013
- Closing the Gap Report, 2020
- CSO Armidale ATSI Committee and CSO System Performance Team qualitative data.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008 highlights that, for Australian schooling to promote equity and excellence, governments and all school sectors must improve educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians and encourage them, their families and their communities to hold high expectations for their education.

Educational outcomes for Indigenous children and young people are substantially behind those of other students in key areas of enrolment, attendance, participation, literacy, numeracy, retention and completion. Meeting the needs of young Indigenous Australians and promoting high expectations for their educational performance requires strategic investment. Australian schooling needs to engage Indigenous students, their families and communities in all aspects of schooling; increase Indigenous participation in the education workforce at all levels; and support coordinated community services for students and their families that can increase productive participation in schooling. Similarly, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 establishes the principles and priorities that act as a scaffold to guide systems to progress outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The strategy's vision is for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to achieve their full learning potential, be empowered to shape their own futures, and be supported to embrace their culture and identity as Australia's First Nations peoples (pp. 1-2).

“Australia has failed to improve educational outcomes for many
Indigenous Australians and addressing this issue must be a key
priority over the next decade”
(Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,
December 2008)

THE STRATEGY IDENTIFIES SEVEN PRIORITY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT (PP. 5-6)

1. Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development -
ensuring children and young people are taught by skilled educators who are culturally competent in the local context and set high expectations for learning that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
2. Culture and Identity -
through the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, ensuring all Australian children and young people have the opportunity to learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
3. Partnerships -
building quality partnerships between education sectors and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other stakeholders, characterised by listening and responding, strong accountability and active engagement, collaborative information sharing and informed decision making.
4. Attendance -
working with schools and services to engage families and communities on strategies to address barriers to school attendance.
5. Transition Points including Pathways to Post-School Options -
supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people at critical stages of their education to improve engagement, retention and attainment and develop the skills to participate fully in schooling, society and work.
6. School and Child Readiness -
ensuring high quality, culturally inclusive early childhood education services and schools work with families and communities to establish a sound foundation for early learning, including a child’s transition to school.
7. Literacy and Numeracy -
developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s English literacy and numeracy proficiencies 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.

The ATSI Implementation Plan supports the ongoing development of inclusive Catholic schools which effectively integrate Catholic Christian and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in meaningful and supportive ways.

THEMES		
An authentic Catholic Community of Care	Great Learning and Teaching	Strong Teams
GOALS		
The ongoing development of cultural competencies CSNSW Spirituality Doc	Improved faith, learning and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families	A shared commitment to building respectful partnerships characterized by listening and responding; strong accountability; and active engagement with the local community
STRATEGIES		
We will further develop the competencies of CSO and school staff in their understanding of ATSI cultures. The following staff and programs will make major contributions to this work:	We will ensure improved outcomes by monitoring and enhancing the following supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families:	We will further strengthen respectful partnerships through
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wii Gaay Coordinator • Focus Teachers ATSI Ed • AEAs • Let’s Talk Dhawunda • Dharanmay • Warraymalala Secondary Retreat • AP Community Connections (Moree) • G/Y Language Program • Professional Learning opportunities for staff • Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wii Gaay Coordinator • AP: Community Connections (Moree) • Focus Teachers ATSI Ed • AEAs • PLPs • G/Y Language Program • Ready Set Go • Culture and identity¹ • Literacy and numeracy¹ • Reporting to LT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wii Gaay Coordinator • AP: Community Connections (Moree) • AEAs • PLPs • G/Y Language Program • Ready Set Go • Partnerships • A focus on attendance and transition points including pathways to post-school options¹ • School and child readiness¹
EVIDENCE OF IMPACT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased enrolment of ATSI students • Increased numbers of ATSI students receiving the Sacraments • Improved learning progress of ATSI students • Increased attendance of ATSI students • Greater engagement of ATSI parents for PLP process • Evidence of ATSI perspective in teaching programs • Participation in locally developed Aboriginal programs • Visible Evidence in and on school grounds/buildings/website/social media/flags/first impressions/marketing that shows symbols of inclusion and welcome of ATSI families • Success of Transition programs for ATSI students • At the conclusion of their school education, students experience a choice of fulfilling life pathways including employment, further education and training 		

¹ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (2015), Australian Government Education Council