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.
Foreword

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 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

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 protocols¹ 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),² 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 Sorry does not have the same meaning to Indigenous people as non-Indigenous people. In meaning it means ‘sad’. It is a term of sorrow, ‘sorrow for something’, or ‘sorrow for someone’.

² Sorry Day is a day to remember and reflect on the wrongs committed against Indigenous people.

INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools respect and affirm the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples³ 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 reconciliation⁴ 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

¹ Protocols and Guidelines Document – for the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Perspectives in Brisbane Archdiocesan Schools and College

² www.catholiceducation.com.au

³ 3 Sorry does not have the same meaning to Indigenous people as non-Indigenous people. In meaning it means ‘sad’. It is a term of sorrow, ‘sorrow for something’, or ‘sorrow for someone’.

⁴ Protocols and Guidelines Document – for the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Perspectives in Brisbane Archdiocesan Schools and College

⁵ Sorry Day is a day to remember and reflect on the wrongs committed against Indigenous people.

⁶ Sorry does not have the same meaning to Indigenous people as non-Indigenous people. In meaning it means ‘sad’. It is a term of sorrow, ‘sorrow for something’, or ‘sorrow for someone’.

⁷ Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane 2012-2016

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are a species who identifies as such and is accepted as such by the community in which she or he lives or has lived.

The National Report on Schooling in Australia (1994) notes that “Indigenous students are underrepresented in the overall student population.” Consequently, “large numbers of Indigenous students are expected to experience special circumstances that affect their educational outcomes.” (N: 2)

Accountability

Parish and Archdiocesan Catholic schools will:

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