



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shared decision-making framework



Acknowledgement to Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands, seas, skies and waterways from across Queensland. We pay our respect to the Elders, past and present, for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise and thank the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people who contributed to the development of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shared decision-making in Queensland state schools framework* (the framework) and celebrate their diverse strengths, perspectives and wisdom.

For more information, see our [commitment statement](#).

Human rights commitment

We respect, protect and promote human rights in our decision-making. Through the delivery of the framework the Department of Education will seek to advance the cultural rights of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the right to recognition and equality before the law, and the right to education.



Introduction

The Department of Education (the department) recognises the important role education plays in the life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The department is committed to *Equity and Excellence: Realising the potential of every student*, which embeds Aboriginal outcomes and Torres Strait Islander outcomes across every departmental priority.

Schools cannot improve educational outcomes alone. Aboriginal families and communities and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, have unique knowledge and insights about their children, which are key to unlocking equity and excellence in education.

The department recognises better educational outcomes are achieved when Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are equal partners in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services.

About the framework

From 2021 to 2024, the department undertook a Local community engagement through co-design pilot in 13 state schools. The framework has been developed taking into account the experiences and feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, school principals and staff who participated in the pilot.

We also sought advice and feedback from departmental staff and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee (QATSJETAC).

The framework has been informed by the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* which commits governments to sharing decision-making with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as equal partners in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services.

The framework's purpose

The framework aims to support Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities and schools, to implement shared decision-making to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland state schools.

The framework provides information to state schools and Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities about:

- what shared decision-making is
- guiding principles for shared decision-making
- scope of shared decision-making arrangements
- key steps to implement shared decision-making
- evaluation of the framework.

Some Queensland state schools will participate in a partnership initiative to engage with their communities and implement the framework. These schools will receive prioritised support and resourcing, as well as act as champions for the communities they serve. Other state schools and their communities may choose to use the framework to share decision-making with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Defining shared decision-making

Shared decision-making involves all parties reaching agreement and sharing responsibility for implementing the agreement as equal partners.

Information sharing, consultation, co-design and collaboration are important parts of the shared decision-making process.

The difference between these processes can be described as follows:

- information sharing involves parties providing information to each other
- consultation is where one party is asked to provide advice or an opinion, but does not make a decision
- collaboration entails parties agreeing together to implement actions
- co-design is a process of designing solutions, however the decision of whether or not to implement the solution might be made by someone else.

Purpose of shared decision-making

Shared decision-making in state schools aims to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, at every stage of learning.

The educational outcomes to be prioritised will be determined as part of the shared decision-making process and may include school attendance, student wellbeing, school disciplinary absences (SDAs), academic achievement, Year 10 to 12 retention, and Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) attainment.

Guiding principles for shared decision-making

The following principles guide how shared decision-making will be implemented.

Culturally capable

Processes implemented to share decision-making will be culturally capable to ensure Aboriginal community members and Torres Strait Islander community members feel welcomed and are freely able to participate in shared decision-making as equal partners.

This requires schools to consider the context of local Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, as well as ways to be inclusive of people where English is not their first language. It may also require the development and implementation of cultural protocols.

Student-centred

Shared decision-making will focus on improving educational outcomes and student needs. Throughout shared decision-making processes, the diverse needs of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students will be considered, including disability and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D).

Students may participate in shared decision-making having regard to their age and capability. When sharing data between schools and community, students' privacy must be respected at all times.

Self-determination and community partnership

All participants in shared decision-making processes will be respected as equal partners. Information will be shared between community and school partners, including evidence of what works, to ensure all parties are equally informed and able to fully participate in shared-decision making.

Community members will be supported to understand government and school decision-making processes to enable them to fully participate in decision-making, including the need to maintain student privacy.

Place-based and community led

The needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities across Queensland are different. Approaches to and processes for shared decision-making will be agreed by communities and schools. The priorities and strategies developed to support students will also be made through shared decision-making with agreement from the school and community members.

Transparent and accountable

Community members, families, and students involved in shared decision-making will be supported to understand government and school processes and the authorising environment in which they operate. Meetings and decisions will be recorded and all parties will communicate the progress made towards implementing decisions made.

Scope of shared decision-making

There are certain decisions that school principals have the sole responsibility and accountability for under the [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#) (EGPA), and as a result a non-delegable duty of care to student safety. These decisions cannot be shared.

Decisions that can be shared:

- supports and strategies to improve students' attendance at school and engagement in learning
- enhanced cultural inclusion at school
- supports to increase students' year 12 completion
- initiatives that support the social and emotional wellbeing of students
- teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local culture and languages.

Decisions that cannot be shared, but community may be consulted on:

- student safety while at school or participating in school activities outside of school
- teaching of the curriculum except where teaching relates to teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and languages
- good order and management of the school
- financial and human resource management of the school
- strategies and initiatives to support individual students where decisions will be between the school and the student's parent or carer.

Departmental policy and resourcing

All decisions made through the shared decision-making process must comply with legislation, as well as departmental policies and procedures. This includes the appropriate use of funding and resources and the need for the highest level of integrity in decision-making, such as the need to identify and manage conflicts of interest.



Resourcing and funding

Not every effective strategy or initiative requires additional funding and resourcing. Schools also have access to a wide range of resources including Indigenous Education Grants, as well as staffing such as School and Community Engagement Facilitators to support strategies and initiatives.

If additional resources are required to implement an agreed strategy or initiative, it will be important that the school investigates whether funding or resourcing is available before commitments are made. The outcomes of any investigation must be reported as part of the shared decision-making process.

Information sharing

School principals can share a wide range of information with the community, including data about student outcomes at a high level. However, some information is protected by legal confidentiality and privacy obligations.

The [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#) and the EPGA include provisions that restrict the sharing of personal information.

Information about individual students, except with the written consent of parents or carers, cannot be discussed or shared during the shared decision-making process.

Steps to effectively share decision-making

Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities, and schools can agree on the steps they will take to implement shared decision-making.

The process outlined below is one which encourages a cycle of continuous improvement with annual reviews undertaken by the shared decision-makers. Community engagement is the essential first step and occurs continuously throughout the process of shared decision-making.



The main steps involved in shared decision-making are:

1. Engage to form relationships

The first and continuous step in any process is to connect with the community, including Local Councils in discrete Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders, Traditional Owners and custodians, parents and carers and students.

It is important the right people are engaged. Time needs to be taken to build relationships with community members.

It is also important to note that in some communities, multiple committees and engagement processes are already in place. With initial research and consultation, it may be appropriate to incorporate shared decision-making in education into existing structures and processes.

A School Community Partnerships Facilitator can support principals to connect with communities and support shared decision-making.

2. Agree to share decision-making

The second step is to reach agreement about sharing decision-making.

School principals will discuss the opportunity to share decision-making with community leaders and members by outlining:

- the purpose and objectives of shared decision-making
- what decisions can be shared and which cannot
- how community members will be supported to participate in shared decision-making.

3. Agree on the process and priorities

Community members and schools will discuss and agree on the process and priorities for shared decision-making.

Options for the process of shared decision-making may include:

- regular meetings
- establishing a Local Community Education Body (LCEB), continuing an existing LCEB or expanding an existing LCEB
- meeting on an as-needs basis
- formalised co-design processes.

They will also discuss and agree the priorities to be addressed and goals to be achieved through shared decision-making.

Agreement should be reached regarding the frequency of meetings and how meetings and decisions will be documented or recorded.

Once a school and community have determined how their shared decision-making arrangement will operate, the details will be documented in an agreement or Terms of Reference and signed by all parties.

4. Sharing decision-making on initiatives to improve outcomes

Once an agreement has been reached on process, priorities and goals to be achieved, community members and schools will be able to identify strategies and initiatives to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students.

The strategies and initiatives will be documented in minutes and action registers or in a formalised work plan. Meetings and decisions, including agreed funding to support the decisions (if applicable), will be documented.

Implementation of agreed strategies and initiatives may be school-led or led jointly by the school and the community.

The principal and community members will provide updates on the implementation of agreed strategies and initiatives on a regular basis.

5. Monitoring and review

Community members and schools will at least annually or more frequently if agreed, review priorities, progress towards achieving goals and implementation of strategies. The review will also consider if the process of shared decision-making was effective. The review date must be written into the shared decision-making documentation to ensure accountability and transparency.

Supports for community members

A range of supports will be provided to enable community members to participate in shared decision-making including:

- training about government and school processes
- remuneration.

Remuneration

Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people must be remunerated for their time participating in formal and planned shared decision-making activities. Remuneration will not be paid under the framework for incidental contact or for activities that do not form part of the agreed shared decision-making process.

From time-to-time, schools may consult students, parents and carers on school activities and programs and will continue to do this on a voluntary (unpaid) basis, even if a parent or carer is also involved in formal shared decision-making activities. Schools must be clear about the capacity in which feedback is being sought.

Remuneration will be based on the requirements of the [Remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland Government bodies](#) (the remuneration procedure) and will commence once agreement has been reached to share decision-making.

The remuneration procedure does not allow remuneration to be paid to public servants.

Daily fees will be paid based on Matrix 1, Level 3, of the Administration and Advice category in the remuneration procedure.

Schools will record and pay remuneration in a timely manner.

Supports for schools

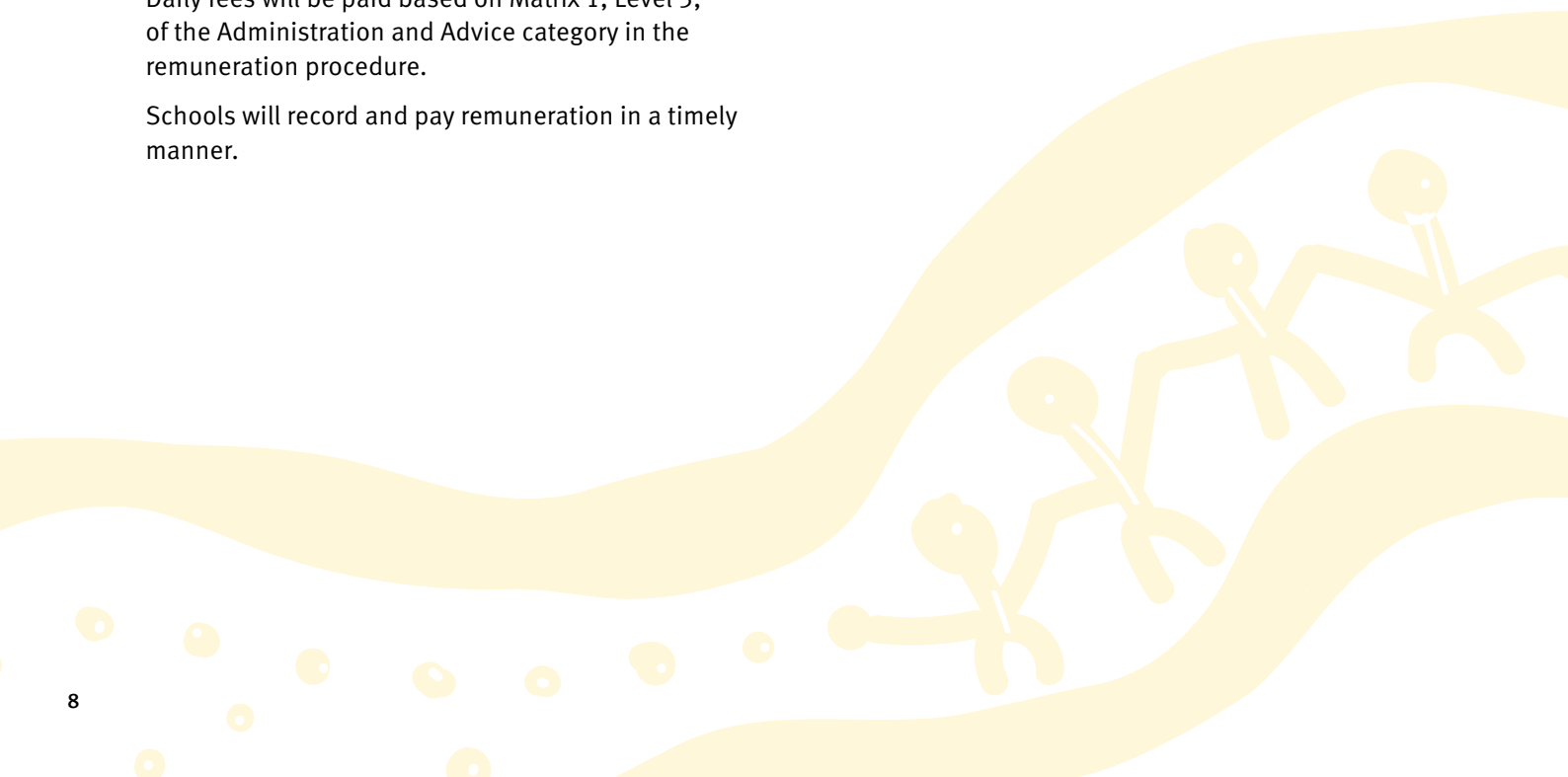
Schools will be provided with a wide range of supports to enable them to effectively engage in shared decision-making including:

- templates and documents available on OnePortal
- good practice examples
- advice and guidance on sharing data to ensure legislative requirements are met
- advice provided through regional Programs and Partnership teams
- training to support shared decision-making.

Evaluation of this framework

In addition to local monitoring and review, the department will undertake an evaluation in 2028, to assess the implementation and impact of shared decision making on community partnerships and student outcomes.

The evaluation will consider qualitative information from Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities and schools, as well as quantitative measures related to student outcomes.



Other resources

Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulations](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019](#)

Policies and procedures

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework](#)
- [Appropriate and ethical use of public resources policy](#)
- [Remuneration procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies](#)
- [Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol](#)
- [Engaging Communities: Empowering Futures framework](#)

Resources and other information to support shared decision-making

- [Fact sheet on remuneration of community members](#)
- [Templates and materials](#)

Further information

For further information, please contact the First Nations Strategy and Partnerships [Engagement team](#)

