



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Workforce Strategy

2019 – 2021

strong, connected, valued and respected



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands and seas across Queensland, and pays respect to Elders, past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation.

This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.

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Artwork

Artwork designed by *Edna Ambrym, Eric Orcher, Philomena Yeatman and Valmai Pollard* from the Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct.

The school yard and building represent a safe place to learn and grow. Our community's future relies on teachers as they know that their students are the future for our people.





Message from the Director-General

Creating workplaces that are reflective of our broader community is essential in supporting Queensland families to flourish at home, at school, at work. Employing a workforce that represents the communities we serve also allows us to develop relationships and build trust so we are better placed to deliver relevant and responsive services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees provide a valued and substantial contribution to our workplaces and schools and acknowledging this will help the department to achieve its vision of every child succeeding in our schools.

As part of our commitment to being a lead agency, this strategy will continue to build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and empower people to act to effect change.

TONY COOK

Director-General

Department of Education



Our vision

The Department of Education Queensland (the department) has a vision whereby all students succeed in our schools.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will have the best prospect of success when they see role models in our workplaces, feel understood and have a sense of belonging through valuing their identity, language and culture.

The department has made a commitment to deliver educational, economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our goal is to create an environment that supports equal opportunities for all Queenslanders and to create workplaces that are culturally safe and inclusive. This strategy commits the department to measurable action, supporting the goals of the department's *Commitment Statement to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples*.

Background

The *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)*, sets targets for health, education and employment outcomes for all government agencies. This agreement has informed the development of the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021 – Stretch (QGRAP)*, the *Queensland Government Cultural Capability Framework*, the *Moving Ahead Strategic Approach*, and the *Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An action plan for Queensland*.

Each of these plans indicate that the best chance of success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate fully in Queensland's economy is to build strong, inclusive, respectful, and culturally capable workforces.

The *More Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI)* 2016 report recommended specific strategies that provide for leadership development, succession planning and the targeting of suitable positions to be filled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. *The department's Teaching Queensland's Future* strategy aims to meet the increasing demand for additional teachers, continue to build the capability, confidence and agility of our teaching workforce and ensure a sustainable supply of teachers delivering quality learning outcomes in our schools.

Reinforcing the priorities for this strategy the department released its *Diversity and Inclusion Framework – We all belong*. This framework recognises that diversity and diverse experiences amongst our employees are critical to understand and connect with all Queenslanders – so we can better meet their needs.

Department of Education context

Within the department Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are under-represented and more likely to occupy:

- administrative and school based positions at lower classification levels compared to more senior positions
- temporary positions compared to non-Indigenous employees, and
- teacher support roles compared to teaching roles.

This strategy commits to 3 percent representation, particularly targeting roles in:

- teaching,
- classified teaching, and
- senior management

The department recognises that inclusive practices are founded on cultural capability and respect through communication and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Indigenous employees.



Key objectives

In implementing the strategy, we will:

Act

across all levels and all roles to ensure every employee understands the role that they play in creating a culturally inclusive workplace

Embed

inclusive practices, policies, and programs that are agile, responsive and culturally capable



Value

the co-design of engagement initiatives with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, elders and community leaders to ensure we deliver responsive services

Investigate

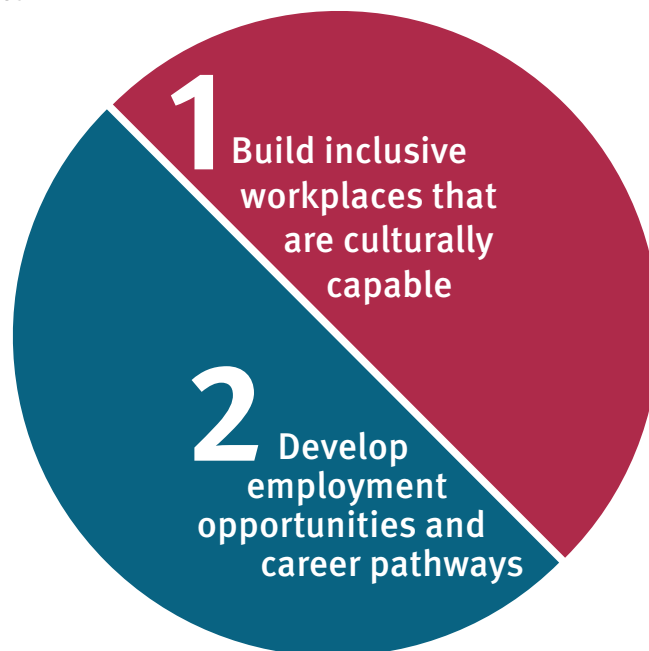
pathways for permanent employment to address social, economic and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

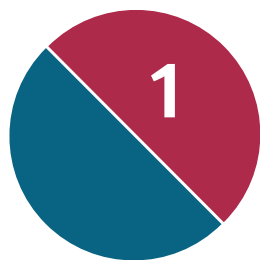
Be the lead agency

that offers pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into senior roles

Priority areas

There are two priority areas addressed in the strategy:





Priority area 1

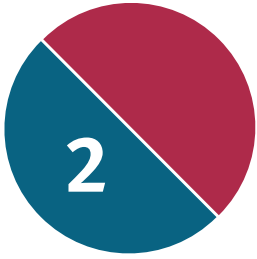
Build inclusive and culturally capable workplaces

Goals

- Workplaces demonstrate inclusive practices and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees for their cultural skills and knowledge
- Ongoing success of local decision-making and program co-design
- Peer support networks are established to assist all staff to enhance their cultural capability and improve communication links to each other
- Programs, policies and practices recognise and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in their community engagement actions
- Community engagement is valued as a vital part of the role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have within our department

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Acknowledge Act Celebrate	Encourage all staff to celebrate significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates and events	Ongoing	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Foster Embed Value	Design an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework that strengthens inclusive practices and actions	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations; State Schools – Indigenous Education;
Act Be the Lead Investigate Value	Form an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Reference Group to guide workforce initiatives	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Be the Lead Embed Value	Establish a network of Peer Support Cultural Advisors in each region to advise managers and employees on appropriate cultural workplace practices	2021	Diversity, Culture and Engagement
Acknowledge Act Embed	Design awareness on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural engagement for all employees	Pilot June 2021	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations
Acknowledge Act Investigate	Develop tools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to balance work, family and community commitments	2021	Diversity, Culture and Engagement





Priority area 2

Develop employment opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

Goals

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have access and opportunity to:

- Further study to support their progression into teaching and leadership roles
- Initiatives to upskill and transition across roles within the department utilising existing scholarship and pathway programs
- Access leadership/mentoring programs available in the Public Service
- Middle to senior level school and non-school based roles
- Identified positions in areas that have significant impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Key Objective	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Evaluate Foster Value	Assess the number, type and levels of roles advertised as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified and develop guidelines and a communication campaign to improve representation where needed	2020	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Human Resources - Talent; Indigenous Policy
Be the Lead Investigate	Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher aide pathway for existing employees to become a teacher	2021	Organisational Transformation and Culture
Be the Lead Investigate	Develop career pathways to senior leadership roles within the department	2021	Organisational Transformation and Culture
Investigate Act Embed	Inclusive recruitment, selection and career development review and implement recommendations	2021	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Human Resources - Talent;
Evaluate Be the Lead Investigate	Assess workforce trends and develop an approach for temporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to transition to permanent employment	2021	Diversity, Culture and Engagement; Human Resources - Talent; Office of Industrial Relations



The legal context

The strategy applies the opportunities and requirements placed on our department by law, ensuring meaningful career opportunities and pathways are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The legal frameworks for our department and the strategy are:

- Industrial Relations Act 2019 (Qld)
- The Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Public Service Act 2008 (Qld)
- Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)

The rights of employees to be treated fairly and to not be discriminated against are also protected by the Human Rights Act 2019. This Act places obligations on public entities, which includes government departments and public servants, to act and make decisions which are compatible with human rights. It protects twenty-three human rights and makes it unlawful for actions or decisions to be made in a way which is incompatible with those human rights and to fail to consider relevant human rights in decision making.

Employees are able to make complaints to either the Queensland Human Rights Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission if they believe they have been directly or indirectly discriminated against on the basis of their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, or immigrant status.

Governance and measuring success

The department will monitor its progress in meeting the milestones and deliverables of the strategy and stated workforce targets as part of our inclusion and diversity program.

To support and demonstrate our commitment, we will:

- Appoint an official Executive Champion for the strategy
- Establish and report to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Reference group on progress using results in the Working for Queensland Survey, School Opinion Survey and the Minimum Obligatory Human Resources Information data to map progress

- Continue to report to the Public Service Commission on progress against workforce targets
- Report on progress to Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) in relation to the implementation of Cultural Capability Training
- Report on progress to the Ministerial advisory committee – the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee (QATSJETAC)

Further reading

The strategy is informed by:

- Department of Education Commitment Statement to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples (DoE)
- Department of Education Diversity and Inclusion framework – *We all belong*
- Department of Education Teaching Queensland's Future strategy
- Report on Service delivery in Queensland's remote and discrete Indigenous Communities (Queensland Productivity Commission)
- Moving Ahead – building a more skilled and diverse workforce (DATSIP)
- Department of Education Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An action plan for Queensland
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy – having skilled educators who are culturally competent (QPS)
- The National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap) – halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (QPS)
- Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch) 2018 – 2021 – Action 3.1 *Increase the proportion of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Queensland Public Service (QPS).*



**Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander**

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Part of the
weallbelong
initiative