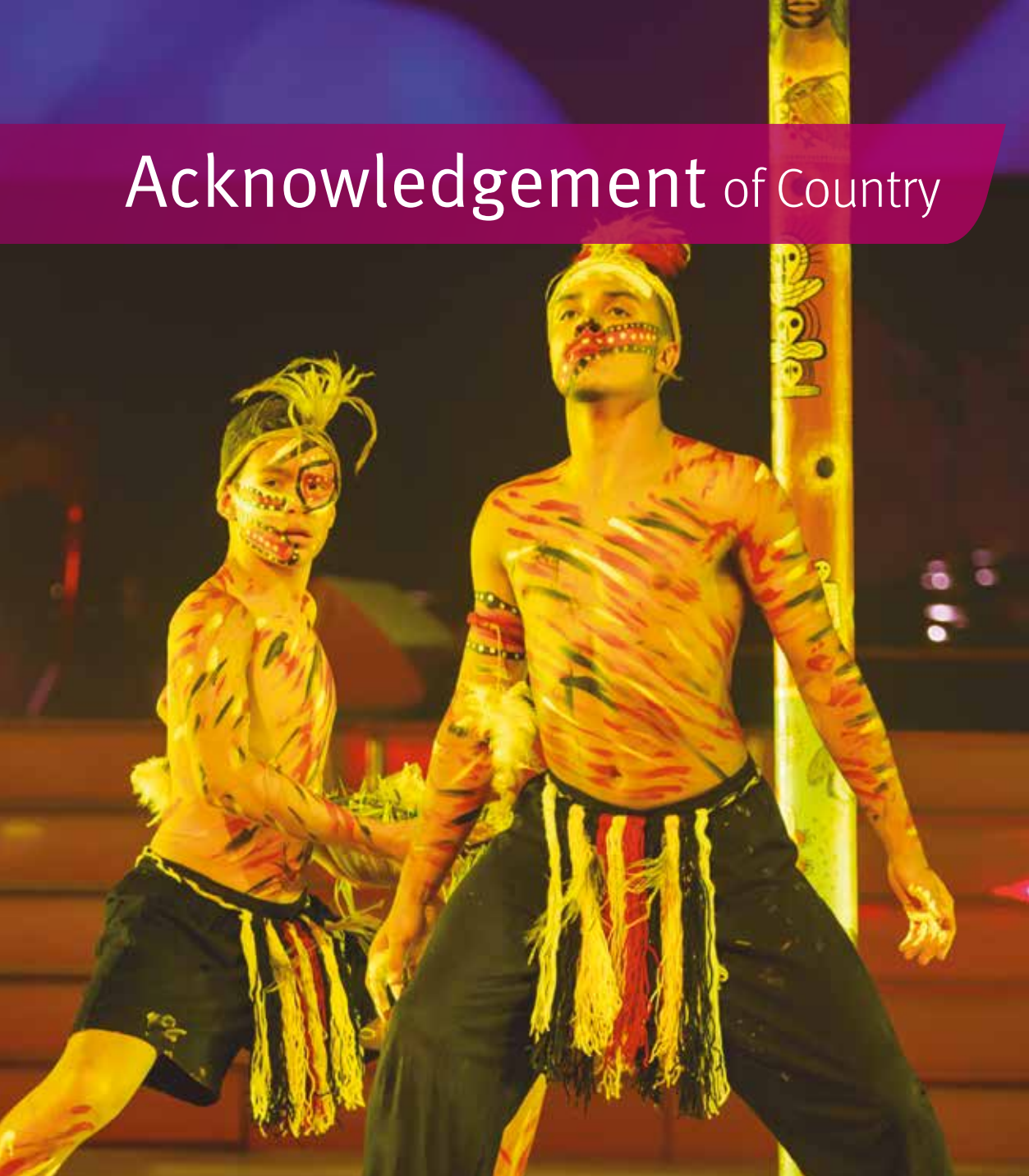


DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

# Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training

An action plan for Queensland

# Acknowledgement of Country



The Department of Education and Training acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands from across Queensland and pays respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture 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.







*Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training* is Queensland's draft action plan to drive higher expectations in early childhood education, school education, vocational education and training, and higher education.

Successive state governments have worked hard to close the gap between education and training outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

This draft action plan goes one step further, aiming for excellence in education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

It builds on some strong foundations, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students achieving significant improvements recently in early childhood education participation, NAPLAN results, and Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and Queensland Certificate of Individual Attainment (QCIA) rates of attainment.

*Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training* sets some big goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people. The initiatives proposed in this action plan will provide students with the confidence to be actively engaged in their education and their communities.

Through this action plan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will have the opportunity to be lifelong learners with the self-assurance to pursue their passions while also maintaining a close connection to their identity, culture, language and land.

I look forward to hearing your views on the directions and initiatives proposed in this draft action plan.

The Honourable Kate Jones MP  
**Minister for Education**



The draft *Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training* action plan sets out the State Government's priorities for delivering skills and training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Education Minister Kate Jones and I are committed to working together to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders get the best possible education and then transition successfully from education to training, higher education and employment.

This draft action plan seeks to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders with incentives to join and complete training, with higher subsidies for qualifications funded under the Certificate 3 Guarantee and Higher Level Skills programs. We know training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is more likely to be successful if it is locally developed and supported and addresses barriers to access and completion.

Last financial year alone, our \$240 million Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) program funded 31 training projects specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. These projects delivered locally-developed training and job opportunities to 810 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Our support for SQW continues in 2017, as does our commitment to funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific projects that lead to quality job opportunities and career pathways. Our ultimate goal is to put Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the path to a brighter future where their skills, talents and culture are being fully utilised and they are engaged as skilled workers, entrepreneurs and leaders.

I look forward to receiving your ideas and feedback on the initiatives outlined in this action plan.

The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP  
**Minister for Training and Skills**

# Achieving excellence



Early childhood, school education and training play vital roles in preparing and inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people to be:

- actively engaged and connected to their local communities and able to participate at state, national and global levels
- lifelong learners who are technologically engaged, knowledge creators, problem solvers, innovators and effective communicators sharing ideas with others and responding positively to change
- successful people who are resilient, able to create opportunities and confident in pursuing their passions
- economically productive as skilled workers, entrepreneurs and leaders of tomorrow.

The Queensland Government remains committed to closing the gap and supporting efforts to meet national targets to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

*Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training* aims to enhance the conversation about 'closing the gap'.

It is not enough to expect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people to only measure their performance against the achievements of other groups.

We need to aim at achieving excellence.

*Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training* presents a vision about:

- ensuring high expectations of and aspirations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people
- raising the bar in our teaching, learning and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities
- celebrating, valuing and building on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and their contribution to education and training
- building on our successes as strong foundations for future excellence.

By focusing on excellence we increase standards, expectations and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people.

# Building on our successes

Our current successes provide a solid foundation for achieving excellence. Queensland has made significant gains across early childhood, schooling, training and higher education in:

- participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten has increased to 93.1 per cent in 2016 - up from just 25.5 per cent in 2008
- proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 children in Queensland state schools achieving the national minimum standard (NMS) for reading in 2016 was 86.3 per cent - up from 68 per cent in 2008
- proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 5 students in Queensland state schools achieving the NMS for numeracy in 2016 was 80.0 per cent - up from 69 per cent in 2008
- proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland state schools achieving at or above the NMS in 2016 was higher than the national averages for all Australian Indigenous students across reading and numeracy for all year levels
- proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school students starting high school in Year 8 (in 2014) and continuing to Year 10 in 2016 was 95.1 per cent

- proportion of Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school students graduating with either a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) in 2016 was 97.0 per cent - up from 42.1 per cent in 2008
- participation and qualification completions rates by publicly-funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Education and Training (VET) students have increased year on year - up 6.0 per cent and 22.6 per cent respectively in 2015-16 from previous year
- enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education increased by 51.0 per cent between 2011 to 2015.

However, we know there is more to be done to achieve excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people.

While kindergarten participation has increased there is still more to be done to achieve the national target of 95 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Literacy and numeracy remains a high priority, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners who speak English as an additional language or dialect and lifting performance into the upper two achievement bands. School attendance also remains a high priority, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in remote communities.

Although our retention rate to Year 10 is high, there is room to improve retention to the end of Year 12 – too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people disengage from school early. While recognised as important stepping stones to higher qualifications, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be over-represented in lower level VET qualifications (certificate III and below).

## National Closing the Gap targets

Targets related to early childhood, education and training include:

- 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education (by 2025)
- halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy achievements within a decade (by 2018)
- close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years (by 2018) and
- halve the gap for Indigenous Australians aged 20-24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates (by 2020).





# Empowering approach



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are amongst the oldest continuing cultures in the world. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have a wealth of knowledge and skills passed through Elders and family links.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, Elders, families and communities have high aspirations for their children, students and young people, who bring unique strengths to their learning experience such as:

- knowledge and close connection to their identity, land, language and culture
- listening, recounting and memorisation skills developed through engaging in oral traditions
- social, interpersonal and respectful relationship capabilities, developed through a strong understanding of kinship, family connections and other social contacts
- communication experiences in learning and using more than one language and/ or dialect, including code switching skills between home language and Standard Australian English
- high levels of independence at a young age and a strong sense of caring for others younger than them
- high levels of resilience, with hopes and dreams for their own future and that of their peers, community and children.

*Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training* aims to improve the early childhood, school education and training outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people by recognising and building on these strengths.

It also aims to embrace and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities, languages, histories and traditions in learning environments so that they are positive places of belonging and empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Delivering our plan

We will monitor and report on our progress in delivering each action in this plan and its impact on achieving our long-term aspirations for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people.

Our plan will play a key role in ensuring:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people are empowered to be strong in their culture and identity
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are participating in and benefiting from quality early childhood programs
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners are able to confidently reach their potential and achieve academic success
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students are regularly attending and engaging in education
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people are well prepared and confident to make successful transitions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to achieve success
- staff and services are culturally capable, and are effective in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be successful learners.

Implementation of this plan will be driven through the Department of Education and Training's Indigenous Governance Committee (IGC). The IGC is chaired by the Director-General (DET) and comprised of senior departmental leaders, a regional director, school principal and the Chair of the Ministerial Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee (QATSIETAC). QATSIETAC is a Ministerial expert advisory committee comprising eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members whose role is to provide independent expert and cultural advice to the education and training Ministers and Department on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood, education and training matters. Given their role in overseeing implementation of the action plan, both the IGC and QATSIETAC will be provided regular progress reports on its implementation. The Department will produce an annual report on education and training outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people in Queensland to monitor progress on implementation of the action plan, inform future actions and report progress against national targets.

## *Part of a larger effort by government*

The action plan supports and leverages on the Advancing education and Advancing skills for the future action plans, as well as a range of other key departmental, whole-of-government and national initiatives related to improving the early childhood, education, training and economic development outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It assists with addressing:

- the objectives of the Queensland Government's strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy under the Moving Ahead Strategy
- Queensland's obligations under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan.





“A strengths-based approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a human rights approach. This approach is about finding ways in which individuals, family units and communities can build on their capabilities”

**Mick Gooda, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner**







# Making early gains

## Highlights

- Invest \$38.8 million over four years to secure the future of Queensland's ten Children and Family Centres
- Support ECEC services to provide culturally appropriate learning environments
- Strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Participation in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has significant benefits for cognitive, language and social development. There is strong evidence that positive gains made in the early years of learning have long-term developmental and educational benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten remains a critical priority for the Queensland Government. Along with all other state and territories, Queensland has committed to lift the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four-year-olds in early childhood education to 95 per cent.

The Queensland Government is also committed to supporting access to quality early years services and early learning opportunities that are integrated, culturally responsive and respectful, including through:

- providing information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents about the benefit of early learning, how and where it can be accessed and the different types of early learning available
- adopting strength-based approaches to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, particularly young mothers and fathers, by building on their capabilities to support their children's participation and development
- addressing access barriers such as cost, transport, distance and health problems.

Achieving increased kindergarten participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children requires the support of services staffed by qualified and experienced educators.

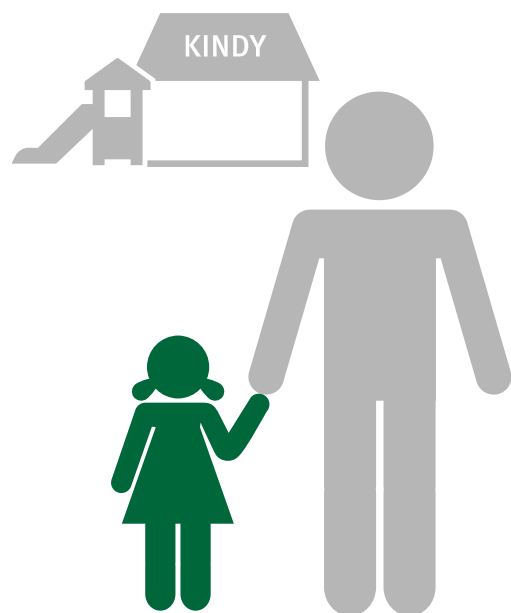
Services that are culturally appropriate, holistic and build on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are most effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workers is a key component of addressing cultural competence and creating a feeling of belonging. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are more likely to be able to embed local culture and language. It is also critical that non-Indigenous staff have awareness of how to engage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



“Investing in early childhood education for disadvantaged children is an important component of a strategy for developing skills that help people thrive and society prosper”

James Heckman,  
Nobel Laureate in Economics



**93.1%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in a kindergarten program in 2016 – up from just 25.5% in 2008

## Increased access and participation

We will increase kindergarten access and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by:

- providing subsidies to support low or no-cost access to kindergarten for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- supporting ECEC services to provide culturally appropriate and welcoming environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- continuing pre-Prep in schools to support delivery of the Early Years Learning Framework and quality kindergarten programs in specified remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. **R**
- promoting the importance of the early years for children's development and assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access kindergarten in the year before school through a state-wide communications campaign.

## More holistic and responsive services

We will support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early years services by:

- delivering vital early education, health and family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by investing \$38.8 million over four years in Children and Family Centres
- undertaking capital works to upgrade the physical early learning environments of ten state schools delivering pre-Prep in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. **R**

## Greater service and workforce capability

We will build the capacity and capabilities of the early childhood education and care workforce to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by:

- providing relevant professional development, mentoring and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, including those in remote communities **R**
- developing a new online professional development resource to provide early childhood educators with the tools to implement effective, culturally appropriate early years programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- developing and implementing strategies to increase the number of qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in the ECEC sector
- supporting educators in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to gain early childhood qualifications through the Indigenous remote support coordination project **R**
- continuing to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership capacity in early childhood education and care through professional development programs.



# Reaching learning potential

## Highlights

- Employ English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) coaches to lift the reading outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Continue and expand the Solid pathways program for high performing students
- Establish Clontarf academies to improve achievement and attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male students through sport.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students engaging with their learning is essential for their success. While school attendance is important, evidence suggests that student engagement with their learning is key to achieving improved educational outcomes.

School engagement can be shaped by the students' needs, the school and classroom context and the wider environment. Schools and educators that have an increased understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and histories are better equipped to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Students do better in education when learning reflects and positively reinforces where they come from, what they value and what they already know. Learning needs to connect with students' existing knowledge. Identity, language and culture are an asset and a foundation of knowledge on which to build and celebrate learning and success.

Foundational skills for academic achievement like reading, writing and numeracy remain a critical focus. In particular, being able to read is a key foundation skill for every child's success at school. Evidence indicates the frequency of reading to children at a young age has a direct causal effect on their schooling outcomes regardless of their family background and home environment.



## Connections to culture

We will ensure learning connects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and language by:

- supporting state schools to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives by developing culturally appropriate teaching and learning resources and providing professional development to regions, schools and teachers
- supporting state schools to understand and respond to the language backgrounds and language learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by:
  - engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in learning and achieving in schools by teaching Standard Australian English explicitly, actively and meaningfully and
  - supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's access to their heritage by maintaining, learning or researching their traditional cultures and languages.

# 86.3%



of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students in state schools met the national minimum standard for Reading in 2016 - up from 68%



## Engagement in school

We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to remain engaged in school by:

- partnering with the Clontarf Foundation to establish academies in the south west, far north and north Queensland regions to improve engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male students in education through participation in sport
- engaging allied health specialists to work with remote schools to identify and treat underlying factors impeding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ability to engage in learning **R**
- establishing a Youth Engagement Alliance made up of representatives from key government agencies, as well as training and schooling sectors to strengthen collaboration, better share information and identify ways to lift outcomes for disengaged students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Solid Pathways is a unique, academic extension program aimed at high achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 4 – 12. It supports students to maintain their academic success through developing their higher order thinking skills. Students connect with a community of other high-performing peers and create an environment that supports and celebrates their success. Evidence indicates that the program has had a positive effect in helping students maintain their achievement in the upper two bands of NAPLAN.

## Support for students to succeed at school

We will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to succeed at school by:

- targeting resources to lift the reading outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school students in the early years (from Prep to Year 3) by employing specialist coaches in reading and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)
- supporting high achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school students in Years 4 to 12 through the Solid Pathways program and expanding the program to North Queensland and Far North Queensland.
- establishing targets and outcomes in a new three-year agreement between the Department of Education and Training, and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, aimed at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in youth detention centres to achieve their full potential and ensuring quality education and training services.

## Improved school performance

We will support schools to implement best practices initiatives to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by:

- developing an Indigenous Dashboard on OneSchool to provide greater visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes at statewide, regional and local school levels
- supporting schools to develop and share evidence about what works in particular contexts to promote learning and school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- convening an annual forum with state schools to showcase best practice models in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- establishing videoconferencing facilities in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community schools to facilitate greater information sharing and communication. **R**

# Developing skills



## Highlights

- Prioritise participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under the Annual VET Investment Plan to engage in training that offers social and economic benefits
- Fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific projects under Skilling Queenslanders for Work to provide skills development, nationally-recognised training and job opportunities.

Developing skills is fundamental to Queensland's economic prosperity. It is a key driver of productivity and economic growth, and is central to shaping our human capital and community capacity.

The Queensland Government is committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and supporting them to participate fully in Queensland's vibrant economy.

Economic opportunity is underpinned by having skills and jobs that flow onto personal and social benefits for individuals and communities. People with the right skills, experience and commitment will have greater prospects in the labour market.

High-level qualifications have the greatest benefits for students. They increase future income and employment opportunities. Increasing the number of highly educated and qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the skills, knowledge and qualifications sought by employers will boost their employment opportunities.

Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is more likely to succeed and deliver better outcomes when it:

- is locally developed, with an understanding of the local environment and supported by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- addresses barriers to access and successful completion
- builds on existing knowledge and affirms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language and identity
- is developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, industry, Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and other key stakeholders.



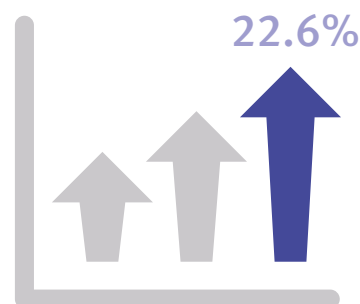
Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) provides training to people who are under-utilised or under-employed in the labour market. In 2015-16, SQW funded 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific projects at a total cost of \$4.03 million to provide skills development, nationally recognised training and job opportunities to 810 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



## Incentives for training

We will incentivise VET for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by:

- providing subsidies at higher concessional rates towards the cost of training for qualifications funded under the Certificate 3 Guarantee (C3G) and Higher Level Skills (HLS) programs
- contributing 100 per cent subsidy toward the cost of training and assessment services for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices and trainees under the User Choice program
- providing a location loading, in addition to eligible training subsidies, to support the costs of training in Cape York and Torres Strait communities. <sup>R</sup>



VET qualification completions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2015-16 have increased by 22.6% from 2014-15

## More responsive training

We will target the training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by:

- ensuring appropriate levels of community-based support are provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertaking training through Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW)
- providing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through projects that seek to enable economic participation in rural and remote communities, with funding directed to strategic priorities identified by the Department of Education and Training and Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) <sup>R</sup>
- working with the local community to target SQW programs where it is most needed
- including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific qualifications and skill sets in the Queensland Training Subsidies List that will attract government subsidies through C3G and HLS programs.

## Real pathways

We will build the skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in Queensland's future economic growth by:

- continuing to fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific projects under SQW to provide skills development, nationally-recognised training and job opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- working with the Local Government Association of Queensland to allocate SQW First Start traineeship positions to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils <sup>R</sup>
- working with industries that provide employment pathways to develop workforce development plans that open up career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

# Transforming pathways



## Highlights

- Build students skills and knowledge of jobs for the futures through the Digital Careers program
- Deliver coding and robotics demonstrations and education sessions with high achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students'
- Engage regional STEM champions to lift Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement and participation in STEM.

Science and technology have changed our world by transforming the way we live, the way we work and who we are. Engaging with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) will prepare students to take advantage of opportunities of a knowledge-based economy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students underachieve in science and mathematics at both primary and secondary levels and are significantly under-represented in science, engineering and mathematics courses at university.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have unique knowledge systems that contain a wealth of scientific information and contribute to all fields of science. They provide different perspectives about the world and are a unique and vital part of Australia's knowledge capital.

The teaching of STEM to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should build connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and science. Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Elders and role models is important in promoting STEM to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Many universities, business and industry groups work with schools to implement outreach activities that support aspiration building and mentoring. Strengthening these relationships will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students develop a deeper understanding of the skills needed for the jobs of the future.



## Increase engagement with STEM

We will increase engagement, participation and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in STEM by:

- recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence and achievement in STEM through offering the Peter Doherty award category for Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM student
- engaging regional STEM champions to implement targeted strategies aimed at lifting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement and participation in STEM.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Marine Science (ATSIMS) program combines Indigenous ecological knowledge and marine science through field-based, hands-on curriculum activities. Program activities bolster students' interest in marine science careers and provide the skills, knowledge and experience to pursue those careers. Now in its fourth year, the ATSIMS program has engaged more than 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 9 and 10 students from schools across North Queensland. In 2015, the first cohort of ATSIMS alumni graduated from school and many are now enrolled at university. In recognition of its achievements, ATSIMS was awarded the 2016 Queensland Reconciliation Award (Education category).



## Connection between STEM and culture

We will build connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and science by:

- supporting teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the science curriculum through the Curriculum into the Classroom initiative
- supporting schools to participate in programs delivered through the Outdoor Education and Environmental Centres (OEECs) that link traditional knowledge and values to modern environmental science concepts and connect young people to land.

## STEM partnerships

We will implement partnerships with key stakeholders to promote STEM participation by:

- building students' skills and knowledge of jobs for the future through the Digital Careers program in partnership with the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) and the CSIRO
- collaborating with DSITI to deliver coding and robotics demonstrations and education sessions with high achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Supporting successful transitions



### Highlights

- Provide holistic support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in targeted remote communities transitioning from home to early childhood services and then onto school
- Case manage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior students identified as being at risk of not receiving a QCE or QCIA at the end of Year 12
- Provide fee free training to eligible Year 12 graduates who enrol in a high priority qualification within 12 months of completing school

Learning is a life-long activity, beginning in the home and extending through to formal settings including child care, preschool, school, training and higher education institutions and the workplace.

All children, students and young people must make a number of education-related transitions throughout their education journey. These include:

- commencing early childhood education and care
- starting school
- changing year levels within a school
- transferring from one school to another
- shifting from primary school to secondary school
- moving from secondary school to vocational education and training or tertiary education
- commencing employment.

Transitions can be particularly challenging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people. Ensuring they have the support they need to achieve success at these transition points is critical.

## Improved school readiness and transition

We will improve school readiness and transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by:

- implementing the *Ready Together: Remote Early Years Transitions project* in four target communities to provide a holistic, community-focussed approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's transition <sup>R</sup>
- managing the impacts of middle ear disease and associated hearing loss during the early years of childhood in partnership with Queensland Health, early childhood education and care sector and other key stakeholders
- supporting positive transitions into Prep with a focus on valuing and respecting the languages, cultures, histories and identity of families through the *Transition to School* initiative.

## Increased school retention and completion

We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to remain in school and successfully complete Year 12 by:

- case managing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school students in the senior phase of learning who have been identified as being 'at risk' of not receiving a QCE or QCIA at the end of Year 12
- continuing to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote communities to access secondary education in urban and regional locations through the *Transition Support Service* <sup>R</sup>
- working with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation, an independent public trust managed by the Public Trustee, to support the provision of QCE scholarships to eligible Year 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland state schools.

## Post-school pathways

We will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to successfully transition to post-school training and employment by:

- working with the DATSIP to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 school leavers transitioning to training or employment as part of their Youth Employment Program
- implementing the Indigenous Opportunities Hub in partnership with schools, employers and other key stakeholders to connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and school leavers with training and employment opportunities
- providing fee free training to eligible Year 12 graduates who enrol in a high priority qualification within 12 months of completing school
- working with Queensland universities to improve the preparation, access and transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and young people into higher education.

Winner of the 2015 QCE Achievement Award for the highest achievement by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student, Aidan Train's passion for maths and science has inspired him to study a Bachelor of Engineering majoring in civil engineering at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba. Aidan said his parents placed a strong emphasis on education which was a vital part of his success and motivation for education. He also credited the support of his teachers who helped him get through Years 11 and 12 at Spinifex State College in Mount Isa. Aidan's ultimate ambition is to apply his mathematical and scientific knowledge in practical ways in the construction industry to expand and develop Australia's infrastructure.



# 97.0%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 state school students graduated with either a QCE or QCIA in 2016 - up from 42.1% in 2008



# Engaging partners

## Highlights

- Implement the Deadly kindies program in partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health to promote benefits of early childhood education
- Train teachers on the impacts of middle ear disease through a partnership between Queensland Health, State, Catholic and Independent schools.

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

There is clear evidence that effective partnerships will help achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, carers, families and communities have key roles and responsibilities in contributing to improving outcomes. Families are the first educators of their children and they continue to influence their children's learning and development during the school years and long afterwards.

Effective engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels is essential. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be involved in developing and driving solutions, particularly at the local community level. The Department of Education and Training will involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design and delivery of programs locally and regionally.

Effective cross-sector partnerships involving community, government, non-government, education, business and industry sectors are also critical to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people. Cross-sector collaboration is a means of drawing on the collective skills and competencies of each of the sectors involved. It achieves a much more integrated and effective approach.

Finally, a strong partnership between the Queensland and Australian governments, and their agencies, is also essential to the success of strategies to improve outcomes.

Deadly Kids, Deadly Futures - Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Ear and Hearing Health Framework (2016-2026) - aims to prevent and manage the high rate of middle ear disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This initiative will: upskill doctors and nurses; provide training for teachers across Queensland; and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services and communities.



## Strong engagement with parents, carers, families and communities

We will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve student learning outcomes by:

- working with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee to improve the education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people
- engaging parents to actively participate in their children's education through initiatives like playgroups, families as first teachers and parents and citizen's associations
- implementing the Academic Success Guarantee as a parent-school partnership approach to drive expectations and individually case manage student attendance and achievement across a range of locations from Prep to Year 12
- improving information sharing and communication between schools and the community through developing community report cards on school performance and facilitating local school-community forums.

## Greater collaboration across government

We will collaborate across government agencies to improve outcomes by:

- working with DATSIP to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to complete their training, attain a qualification and move into employment through the *Indigenous VET partnership*
- leading a cross-agency working group with other key agencies to identify additional interventions and facilitate coordinated service delivery to support children with complex social and emotional behaviours and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- continuing to work with the Australian Government to implement the *Remote School Attendance Strategy* in a select group of communities across Queensland. **R**

## Partnerships with non-government sector

We will work in partnerships with the non-government sector by:

- partnering with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health to promote the importance of early childhood education through the Deadly kindies program across southeast Queensland and other key regional centres with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait populations
- working with Queensland Health, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Independent Schools Queensland and other key stakeholders to minimise the educational impacts of middle ear disease and associated hearing loss for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.



# Building capability

## Highlights

- Identify and mentor emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leaders
- Provide scholarships for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who want to study teaching
- Maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to access Queensland Government procurement contracts.

The Department of Education and Training has an important role in creating the conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people to achieve excellence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are, in many ways, distinct from those of non-Indigenous people. This has implications for the way we develop policies and deliver services. To achieve our goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people, the Department of Education and Training needs to be capable and accountable.

We will focus on our people, with an emphasis on:

- attracting and retaining a diverse and skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
- developing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in leadership roles
- developing our skills and values to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- increasing our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives.

We will also maintain a focus on our systems by:

- using research, evaluation and data to understand outcomes and inform action
- embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within policy development
- adhering to appropriate principles and protocols in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

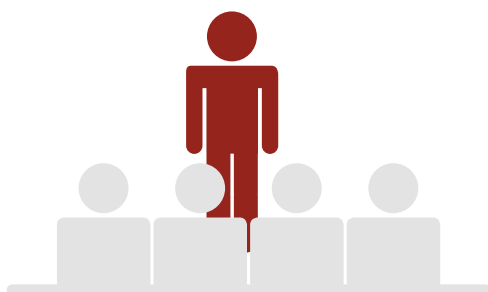
The Department's Cultural Capability Action Plan 2016-17 details our commitment to build the cultural capability of our workforce and systems to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students, parents and community.



## Employment opportunities

We will grow and develop the Department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce by:

- expanding the uptake and delivery of early childhood / children services qualifications by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP)
- attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leavers to seek employment in the public sector
- providing scholarships for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who want to study teaching at a Queensland university through the Pearl Duncan teaching scholarships program
- transitioning school-based employees previously employed through the Australian Government's Community Development Employment Program into state-funded positions **R**
- identifying and mentoring emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leaders through implementing the Aspiring Leaders program
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander career development to enhance representation at management and executive levels.



# 612

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Queensland State Schools - comprising 1.4% of all teachers

## Support for teachers and school leaders

We will build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners by:

- implementing targeted strategies to attract, prepare and support teachers in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities **R**
- actively promoting cultural awareness and respect in the workforce through delivering culturally appropriate initiatives and services
- enhancing staff awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through the continued implementation of the Hidden Histories - Crossing Cultures program
- delivering the EALD Hub online course as a key professional development activity for all staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- appointing principal coaches in remote communities to support principals to lead improvement, innovation and change that lifts outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students **R**
- ensuring strong, long-term leadership in remote community schools through reviewing remote school principalship. **R**



## Build systemic capability

We will build the capability of the system by:

- updating and promoting cultural awareness modules for all Department of Education and Training employees through online training programs
- developing a partnership framework to promote and guide partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities across the department
- recognising, celebrating and participating in significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events
- maximising opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to participate in Queensland Government procurement contracts with the aim of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business share of Government procurement.

The Department of Education and Training is implementing a new and exciting initiative called the Aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders program for Queensland. The program is designed to develop the leadership capabilities and competencies of aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leaders. It offers participants professional learning opportunities such as coaching and mentoring to build their capacity to be high-performing school leaders.

# Join the conversation

We want Queenslanders to join the conversation about our plan for advancing the education and training outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people.

You can respond to the draft action plan in these ways:



## *Consultation roundtables*

Three consultation roundtables will be held with key stakeholders in southeast Queensland - one for early childhood, one for school education and one for training and higher education.



## *Regional consultation forums*

Separate forums will be held in Department of Education and Training regions with the support of regional Indigenous education reference groups and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.



## *Written submission*

The draft action plan will be released through the Department of Education and Training website. Key stakeholders are invited to write a submission to respond to the priorities and actions outlined in the draft action plan.



## *Online survey*

The draft action plan will also be released online through the Queensland Government 'Get Involved' consultation portal where the public will be invited to respond to an online survey.

Visit <https://indigenousportal.eq.edu.au> for details of the consultation process and more information about how you can share your ideas.

