

Reframing the Relationship plan



Acknowledgement of Country

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

Human Rights commitment

We promote equity and excellence by our commitment to respect, protect and promote human rights in our decision making. Through the delivery of this Reframing the Relationship Plan 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. Children can access a primary and secondary education appropriate to their needs. Everyone can access education and training that helps them get work.

Foreword



Our department can transform lives and we acknowledge that comes with enormous responsibility. We are committed to equity and excellence in everything we do – in early child services, state schools, promoting fair pay and safe working conditions and supporting a vibrant racing industry. We are committed to placing the aspirations, views and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, young peoples, children and communities at the forefront of all that we do.

This commitment outlines our intent to actively listen to and engage with our stakeholders and demonstrates the value we place on self-determination. This is based on the five core principles of building on strengths; cultivating relationships and connections; demonstrating cultural respect and recognition; employing appropriate communication and language; and lifting capability and creating opportunities.

We also recognise the enormous potential of our department to support reconciliation and truth-telling and healing in the community. It is through education that we can lead the way and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' language and the stories that form a natural progression and learning in our curriculum and schools across Queensland.

Our commitment to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a key aspect of our collaboration and engagement processes. It is essential as we navigate this path together and foster a culture of respect and partnership, that together we can create an inclusive and equitable educational system that benefits all.

As we look ahead, we envision an educational landscape where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's knowledge and perspectives are integrated into curriculum and their languages and stories are revitalised and cultural diversity is celebrated. This vision extends beyond the classroom to encompass every stage of a child's learning. Fostering a sense of union and belonging for all. A vision where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not just stakeholder but leaders in shaping their own educational destiny.

The 2024 Reframing the Relationship Plan sets the baseline for our actions to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop our cultural capability when we provide advice to government and when we deliver services to the community. We understand that developing our cultural capability will take time and must be undertaken in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Michael De'Ath

Director-General

Department of Education

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Introduction

In 2019, the Queensland Government and the Reparations Taskforce developed a joint *Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government* (Reframing the Relationship Commitment). The Reframing the Relationship Commitment acknowledges, embraces and celebrates the humanity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commits us to move forward together with mutual respect, recognition and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

In 2022, the Queensland Parliament passed the *Public Sector Act 2022* (the Act), which introduced a new framework to give effect to the Reframing the Relationship Commitment.

The Act requires all government agencies to develop annual Reframing the Relationship plans to develop their cultural capability when providing advice to government and delivering services to the community.

The Act defines cultural capability as the ‘integration of knowledge about the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the entity’s workplace standards, policies, practices and attitudes, to produce improved outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our department

The *Department of Education's Strategic Plan 2023-2027* outlines our purpose to deliver responsive services focused on equity and excellence for Queenslanders and their communities. Our objectives are:

- a strong start for all children
- every student realising their potential
- fair and safe workplaces and communities
- a vibrant racing industry
- capable people delivering our vision.

The Department of Education (the department) employs more than 95,000 people to deliver services and advise the government. As at 30 June 2023, 2.69 per cent of those employees identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

The department operates 1,262 state schools providing education to around 570,259 students. Around 65,102 identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student, representing approximately 11 per cent of all students enrolled in state schools and approximately 80 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland.

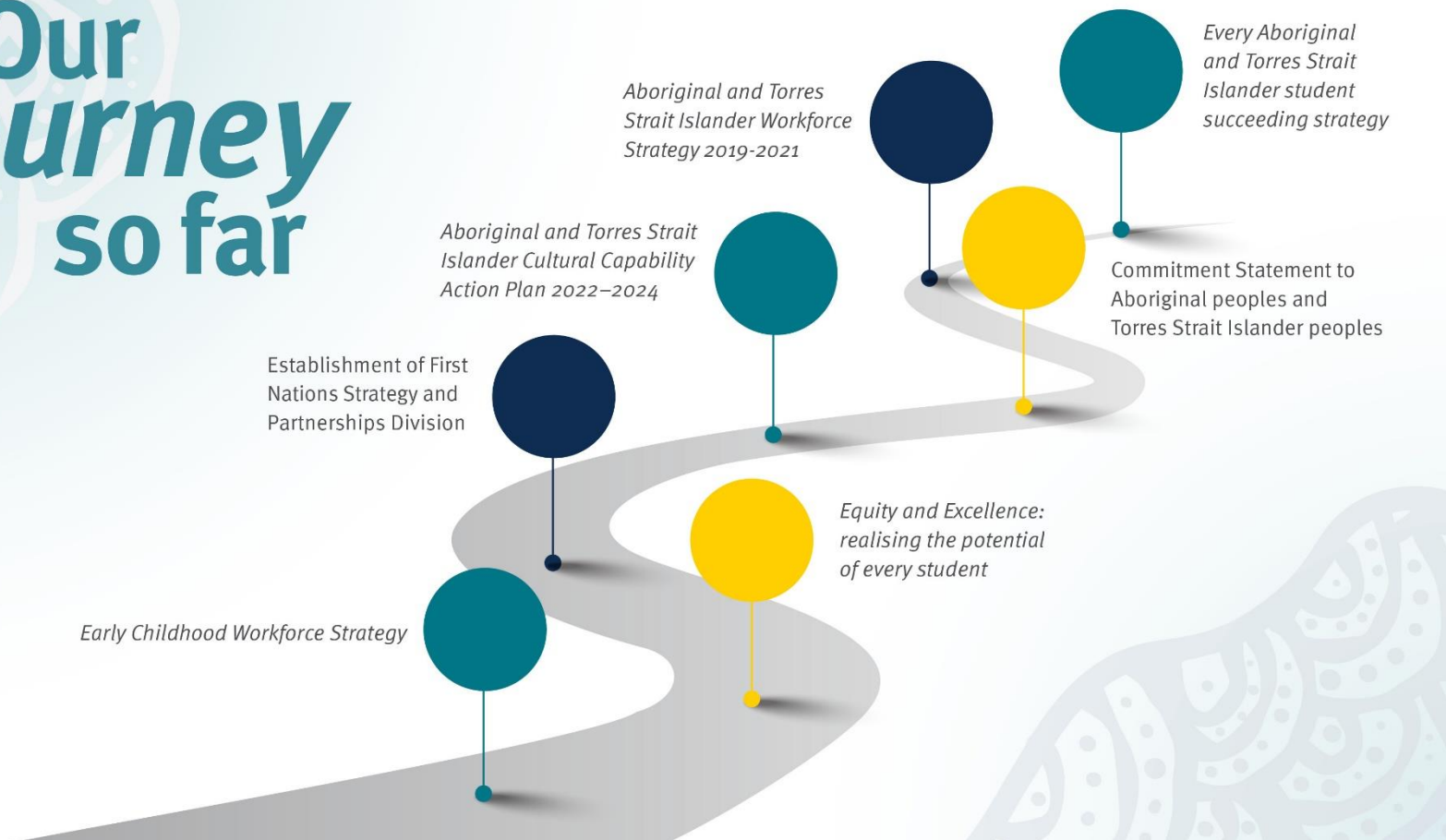
Our journey so far

While around 95 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children access early childhood education in the year before school and the majority are thriving in state schools, we acknowledge that more needs to be done to ensure that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person achieves their full potential.

Over recent years, the department has implemented a range of plans designed to develop its cultural capability and improve educational outcomes including:

- introducing the department's [*Early Childhood Workforce Strategy*](#), which aims to realise the potential of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood professional
- launching the department's [*Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student*](#) strategy, with a renewed focus on realising the potential of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student
- establishing a dedicated First Nations Strategy and Partnerships Division to work across the department, led by an identified Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Deputy Director-General
- publishing the department's [*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2022–2024*](#)
- announcing the department's [*Commitment Statement to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples*](#)
- implementing and co-evaluating the [*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2019-2021*](#)
- releasing the department's [*Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student succeeding strategy*](#).

Our journey so far



Early Childhood Workforce Strategy

The *Early Childhood Workforce Strategy* recognises the significant impact our early childhood workforce has in making sure all children start strong and thrive to realise their full potential.

The strategy was co-designed with the early childhood education sector including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators. It outlines six priorities to build the early childhood education sector and workforce, and commits to targeted actions to support building the cultural capability of services through:

- supporting the delivery of qualifications on country, including continuing the Remote Area Teacher Education Program
- providing access to cultural supports to enhance educators' connections with families
- co-designing Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples leadership, coaching and mentoring programs for early childhood professionals
- providing incentives to attract and retain early childhood teachers in kindergartens in regional, remote and very remote areas.

Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student

In 2023, the department released *Equity and Excellence* – our strategy for every state school student, focusing on educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement, as well as culture and inclusion.

Equity and Excellence strengthens our commitments under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* and embeds outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students across every school priority. The strategy acknowledges that valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and voice is essential in our approach to engagement and learning.

2024 Reframing the Relationship plan

The 2024 Reframing the Relationship plan (the plan) aims to develop our cultural capability at the system level, when we provide advice to the State Government, and when we deliver services to the community.

It outlines the actions we are already implementing and those we plan to implement over the six months to 30 June 2024.

Governance and accountability

A whole-of-agency Reframing the Relationship Steering Committee with membership from the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee (QATSIETAC), will monitor implementation of the plan. An audit will be undertaken in 2024 to assess the plan and to help identify the next actions.

Our next plan and three-year strategy

We acknowledge that developing our cultural capability will take time and can only be achieved through shared-decision making and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2024 we will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, QATSIETAC and our stakeholders to co-design our plan for 2024-25, as well as a three-year Reframing the Relationship strategy to ensure continuous and meaningful improvements in our cultural capability.

Our actions

Below are the various actions the department is undertaking to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, according to the eight domains outlined in section 21 of the Act. While actions are listed under one domain area, they may contribute to multiple domains. These actions outline the current and planned initiatives to be undertaken by the department to 30 June 2024.

Recognition and honouring

Recognising and honouring Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Queensland

We will:

- honour the department's 2022 Commitment Statement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- continue to provide information through the Dandiiri Library, in support of state school educators to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and provide quality resources to schools
- implement the *Naming and opening of departmental assets procedure*, which requires the department to consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when naming a building, school or other assets
- celebrate and commemorate significant days such as NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week
- continue to develop a strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages taught in Queensland state schools and early childhood settings, where deemed appropriate by local Language Owners.

Truth-telling

Engaging in truth-telling about the shared history of all Australians

We will:

- undertake research and document the historical impacts the department and its predecessors have had on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- continue to develop curriculum content about the history, legacy and ongoing impact of government policies on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- engage with staff to raise awareness regarding Reframing the Relationship.

Self-determination

Recognising the importance to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the right to self-determination

We will:

- facilitate establishment of an independent, community-led and managed Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Education and Training Consultative Body
- continue to authentically implement the *Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol for the teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Queensland state schools*, which acknowledges the cultural value in the languages shared by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and supports the rights of Indigenous peoples to control and protect their languages, knowledge and cultural expression.

Cultural capability and cultural safety

Promoting cultural safety and cultural capability at all levels of the public sector

We will:

- continue to support the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework across the entire workforce
- co-design Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, coaching and mentoring programs for early childhood professionals
- deliver cultural capability to early childhood regulatory teams to ensure culturally appropriate assessment of the National Quality Standards
- review policies and procedures to ensure the impacts on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are considered
- embed cultural capability in training for school staff through the Education Futures Institute
- continue our process to co-design and include measures of cultural aspects of wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Queensland Engagement and Wellbeing survey
- continue to develop and publish culturally appropriate information to partner with and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families of students with disability
- review all school discipline policies and resources to ensure they are accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and school staff in their local context
- continue to deliver the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aspirations Program
- continue to deliver Solid Pathways – STEM to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to gain knowledge and confidence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Partnerships and decision-making

Work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to actively promote, include and act in a way that aligns with their perspectives, in particular when making decisions directly affecting them

We will:

- continue to seek and engage QATSIETAC on significant departmental initiatives and policies
- continue to implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages programs in Queensland state schools and early childhood settings, where deemed appropriate by local Language Owners
- continue to partner with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Party to improve cultural capability when supporting First Nations students in care
- pilot the Partnerships Initiative to provide locally responsive strategies co-designed with the community
- facilitate consideration of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in national policy discussions
- conduct consultations to explore a culturally sound model of integrated co-design for Queensland state schools
- work with discrete Indigenous communities to deliver the \$43.2m Discrete Communities Renewal Program to provide equity and improved school infrastructure
- continue to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Councils and communities to support safe and healthy working environments
- work at the national level to progress Closing the Gap initiatives and reforms as they relate to early childhood outcomes.

Workforce and leadership

Ensuring the workforce and leadership of our department reflects the community we serve

We will:

- continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registered teachers to undertake a Masters of Indigenous Language Education through the University of Sydney
- co-design a new department-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy to improve attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through inclusive and culturally safe workplace cultures and by developing career and employment pathways
- continue to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander career pathways service to support non-school based First Nations staff into leadership roles
- support the delivery of early childhood qualifications on country
- support the annual early childhood education and care First Nations Workforce forum.

Fair and inclusive public sector

Promote a fair and inclusive public sector that supports a sense of dignity and belonging for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples

We will:

- launch a new We All Belong Framework for workplace inclusion and diversity
- commence establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network.

Aims, aspirations and employment

Support the aims, aspirations and employment needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the need for their greater involvement in the public sector

We will:

- commence development of an Indigenous procurement strategy to further increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and suppliers providing services and goods to the department
- build the capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-governmental organisations to design and deliver early childhood learning and services
- continue to implement and promote the Identified Position Guideline – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.