1. **Policy Statement**

Catholic schooling authorities in Queensland will develop, in collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, local policies and practices which will enable Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students to have equitable access to quality Catholic education that is mutually enriching for all.

2. **Rationale**

2.1. Catholic schooling authorities in Queensland affirm and acknowledge that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are the original inhabitants of Australia and recognise their ongoing spiritual closeness to the land, seas and waterways. Catholic schooling authorities acknowledge and deeply respect the spiritual beliefs and traditions of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. It is customary to acknowledge their spiritual presence.

2.2. “You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you [the Indigenous peoples of Australia] have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.” (Pope John Paul II Alice Springs Address)

2.3. Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people possess a “deep rooted sacred spirituality ...that continues to encompass the richness and depth of the Sacredness of Spirituality of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the traditions of the Catholic Church.” (Aunty Joan Hendriks)

2.4. Catholic education in Queensland will recognise and celebrate the unique giftedness, histories and cultures that Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students and their families bring to the school communities.

2.5. Catholic education in Queensland in partnership with Aboriginal families and Torres Strait Islander families and their communities aims to meet the unique and diverse educational needs of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and communities.

2.6. Catholic education in Queensland has a strong commitment to Reconciliation with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, guided by the principles of personal dignity, social justice and equity, as reflected in living the Gospel message and according to the mission of the Church.

2.7. This policy statement affirms that the success of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students in education is supported by the successful embedding of Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment of student achievement.

3. **Consequences**

When considering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Catholic schooling authorities may reflect on the following:

3.1. develop policies and appropriate enrolment procedures which actively seek and encourage Aboriginal families and Torres Strait families to access Catholic schools
3.2 implement appropriate pedagogies that align with current curriculum requirements to support the diverse range of Aboriginal learners and Torres Strait Islander learners
3.3 actively engage in inclusive curriculum practices which reflect and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories, cultures and spirituality
3.4 incorporate the spirit of Reconciliation in all aspects of educational activities
3.5 affirm the knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and encourage their contribution and participation in contemporary Catholic educational and learning community activities
3.6 develop and support Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students to gain leadership skills and transition successfully into training, employment and further education
3.7 seek to build Aboriginal workforce and Torres Strait Islander workforce capacity through increased employment and professional development of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

4. References


Pope John Paul II Address of to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Alice Springs, 29 November 1986. The Australian Catholic Record, Volume 83, No3.

Date of Publication: November 2012
Date of review: July 2017