



# Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in schools

A guide for school learning communities



Tomorrow's Queensland:  
strong, green, smart, healthy and fair





Yarrabah  
Pre-Prep

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salivary glands

makes about 1-5 litres of saliva each day Saliva contains enzymes that begin to break down starch in the mouth

glottis

a flap of tissue that closes the windpipe to prevent food from entering the lungs

oesophagus

carries food from the mouth to the stomach using peristalsis (muscle contractions)

stomach

a large muscular food storage area that can expand to hold up to 4 litres of food

intestines

between the stomach and the large intestine. The stomach mixes the food with gastric juices to make chyme

intestines

to the small intestine where most of the digestion and absorption of nutrients and salts occurs

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# Minister's message



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, language and culture are integral to our national identity. There are more than 455 028 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. Some 28 per cent of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres

Strait Islander or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (127 580 people) live in Queensland. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students represent 8.4 per cent of state school students within Queensland.

Many of these Indigenous students arrive at school speaking their home language, which could be Aboriginal English or a Creole, and even one or more Indigenous languages or a combination of these (MCEETYA 2006, p. 17). Standard Australian English is not the home language of many Indigenous students. This mismatch between home and school language has directly impacted on Indigenous students' achievement in literacy and numeracy in the long term (MCEETYA 2004; Warren and de Vries 2008).

Although over the past 20 years progress has been made in the participation, retention and completion rates of Indigenous students within Queensland schools, current statistics demonstrate that Indigenous students still are not succeeding at the same rate as non-Indigenous students within various educational priority areas.

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in schools is a key action for the department under *The Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan*, released in June 2009. Implementing this initiative will help to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

It is also a key priority of the national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* which was endorsed by education ministers in each state and territory in April 2010. The Action Plan outlines actions that will be undertaken at the national, state and local level. A key systemic level action is that: 'Education providers will deliver professional learning to teachers to ensure high levels of cultural and linguistic understanding and competencies to inform the best teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students'.

The EATSIPS guide focuses on systemic change, and personal and professional accountability when incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our school culture, curriculum and pedagogy. It aims to further equip our school leaders and teachers with more in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills to teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous students with confidence and without prejudice.

Schools are able to broaden their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives through implementing a whole-of-school strategy in a way that reflects on the past, responds to the present and creates systemic change for the future.

Student and community engagement in learning are key drivers of Indigenous academic achievement, so the guide also aims to strengthen partnerships between school staff and local Indigenous communities, supporting inclusive education and improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in schools* (EATSIPS) guide is a living document that can be accessed in both hard copy and online. As we live in a world that is constantly changing, the department commits to reviewing the document every two years to ensure the content is kept up-to-date and relevant.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Wilson".

Geoff Wilson MP  
Minister for Education and Training

## Acknowledgments

The EATSIPS guide and materials are made possible through the efforts and contributions of many people over a long period of time, especially the \*Indigenous community members from across the state who continually provide an enormous amount of advice and direction to Queensland schools.

The term Indigenous is used throughout this document to describe Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. 'Indigenous' means 'belonging naturally to a place'; this acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia.

**Warning:** This guide may contain the names and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased. It also contains links to sites that may use images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased.



# The context for change

## Why do schools need to change?

An understanding of and respect for Australia's Indigenous peoples — their personal histories, beliefs and values, languages and lifestyles — is important in many ways. Research tells us that it helps when, as educators, we meet the educational needs of our Indigenous students in very practical ways — we can improve attendance, retention and workplace participation.

Weaving the Indigenous story into the fabric of education through teaching about Indigenous cultures and perspectives in schools has been identified nationally as key to improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives will enhance the educational experiences of non-Indigenous students as well. It will not only give them a more accurate and richer understanding of Australia's history and culture, it will help them to understand how we got to where we are today; and how we might move forward together. It's about reconciliation.

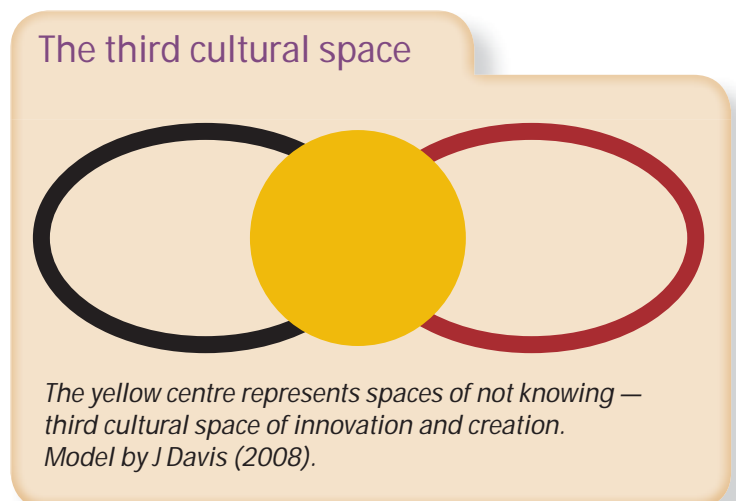
Teachers, students, parents and principals — we all bring our own perspectives, our own ways of seeing the world, through the school gate. Indigenous and non-Indigenous — we all bring our share of 'cultural baggage'; our assumptions about the 'other'. Some of our histories are separate and culturally unique, while some of our histories are shared.

There is a call for educators and institutions to build bridges between the Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to achieve meaningful outcomes, for Indigenous students in particular but for all students in general. The challenge still remains: how does one build bridges between the Western scientific and disciplinary knowledge and the Indigenous 'responsive, active eco-logical' knowledge that views 'language, land, and identity as interdependent in a unique way and constantly renewed and reconfigured' (Williamson & Dalal, Christie cited in Klenowski 2008, p. 11).

It is important for us to acknowledge and respect each others' perspectives — our ways of seeing the world — and to find that place where we can all meet, grow and learn. Perhaps the response to this challenge is the creation of the third cultural space.

The third cultural space recognises that Indigenous communities have distinct and deep cultural and world views — views that differ from those found in most Western education systems. When Western and Indigenous systems are acknowledged and valued equally, the overlapping or merging of views represents a new way of educating.

In the diagram that follows, the black circle represents Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, and the red circle represents Western ways. The middle yellow overlapping circle is the third cultural space.



*The 'third cultural space' process draws on the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories; perspectives; ways of knowing, being and doing (Martin 2009), balanced symbiotically alongside Western ways of knowing, being and doing. The middle ground or the third cultural space represents a new way of working (Bhahba 2004; Yunipingu 1989).*

*Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools: A guide for school learning communities presents a framework or blueprint for supporting change in schools regarding education. It is about a change in thinking. It describes a way to create a cultural space that is shared and rich in the histories of Indigenous peoples.*

# The EATSIPS framework:

In 2004, the *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in schools: P–12 School Guidelines for Administrators and Educators, a building block in Partners for Success* (EATSIPS), was launched during NAIDOC Week. From 2004 to 2008, many schools across Queensland used these guidelines. In 2008–09, as part of a larger research and implementation strategy, six EATSIPS project officers were employed to assist schools in implementing EATSIPS. During this time, the EATSIPS framework was trialled in more than 42 schools across Queensland.

EATSIPS as a process is comprised of three elements:

- (i) this EATSIPS guide
- (ii) EATSIPS implementation
- (iii) EATSIPS online.

This three-part process provides our school learning communities with the scope and tools to better embed Indigenous perspectives across the state. Case studies demonstrating positive effects of the process, online course materials and tools for principals and teachers have been developed, trialled and reviewed. These materials will continue to develop as EATSIPS is more widely recognised as an ongoing process within schools.

The Department of Education and Training believes the development and implementation of cultural awareness and cultural competency training is best done at the local level.

The department also believes that any training should occur under the guidance and leadership of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, with *Crossing Cultures* and other cultural competency training packages, such as leadership training provided by the Stronger Smarter Institute, as essential components of the implementation of EATSIPS.

The *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools: A guide for school learning communities* is a result of this collaborative work with educators in schools, classrooms and workshops, as well as work with Indigenous communities on engaging with teachers.

It is organised into seven sections:

- (i) *Section 1* explains EATSIPS and identifies how the framework supports school leadership and teachers.
- (ii) *Section 2* outlines how the framework provides clarity and resources for schools and teachers.
- (iii) *Sections 3–5* unpack the framework components.
- (iv) *Sections 6 and 7* present the practical application of the framework, providing resources to support planning in schools and measuring change.

# An overview

In 2009, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) began developing the Australian curriculum. ACARA commits to ensuring that its curriculum work acknowledges the need for all Australian children to 'understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' (*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are written into the national curriculum to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and respect the history and culture of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The curriculum documents will be explicit about how the perspectives are to be taught in each learning area and how links can be made between learning areas.<sup>1</sup>

The EATSIPS framework supports teacher professionalism through alignment with the department's existing *Professional Standards for Teachers* and *Leadership Matters* frameworks. The framework will also align with the National Standards as they are developed and implemented by the department.

EATSIPS also aligns with the Queensland College of Teachers' *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* framework.

These frameworks articulate core values, knowledge, skills and attributes that, when incorporated into practice, enable employees to deliver high quality outcomes in their work. As teachers implement *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in schools: A guide for school learning communities* they can identify how their teaching processes and practices link to the knowledge, skills and abilities identified in the two professional standards for teachers frameworks.

This guide is a tool for strengthening teaching practice through reflection, which is a key process underpinning the EATSIPS framework. In using this guide, educators are asked to consider the following questions:

- What is my role in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives?
- What role do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives play in the curriculum for all students?
- How do I include the perspectives in my work?
- How does embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the whole school environment promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student success?

<sup>1</sup> [www.acara.edu.au/aboriginal\\_and\\_torres\\_strait\\_islander\\_education.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_education.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]



# What is EATSIPS?

## Aims of the EATSIPS guide

The EATSIPS guide is a tool for schools to use to help them to build long lasting, meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve Indigenous student learning outcomes, and to provide all Australian students with an understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures.

The guide uses a framework that:

- defines Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- promotes an Indigenous standpoint that challenges and supports existing structures
- focuses professional reflection, planning and practices around the four components — professional and personal accountabilities; community engagement; organisational environment; and curriculum and pedagogy
- provides tools for schools to engage with Indigenous community members in a meaningful way.

## Embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives framework

Operating within the framework are three elements that work together to create a strong school and community culture. Schools need to create a 'third cultural space', a place where we can all meet, grow and learn. The elements through which we do this are:

### 1. Personal reflections

- Our knowledge and understanding of personal histories, attitudes and perceptions inform our expectations of students and impact on student participation and outcomes.

### 2. Whole-school ethos

- Created by the shared language that describes accountabilities, curriculum and pedagogy, organisational environment and community partnerships.

### 3. Classroom ethos

- Created by pedagogy and practices that impact on student participation and outcomes.

Creating a 'third cultural space' allows a school community to work towards helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be stronger and smarter in their journey through lifelong learning.

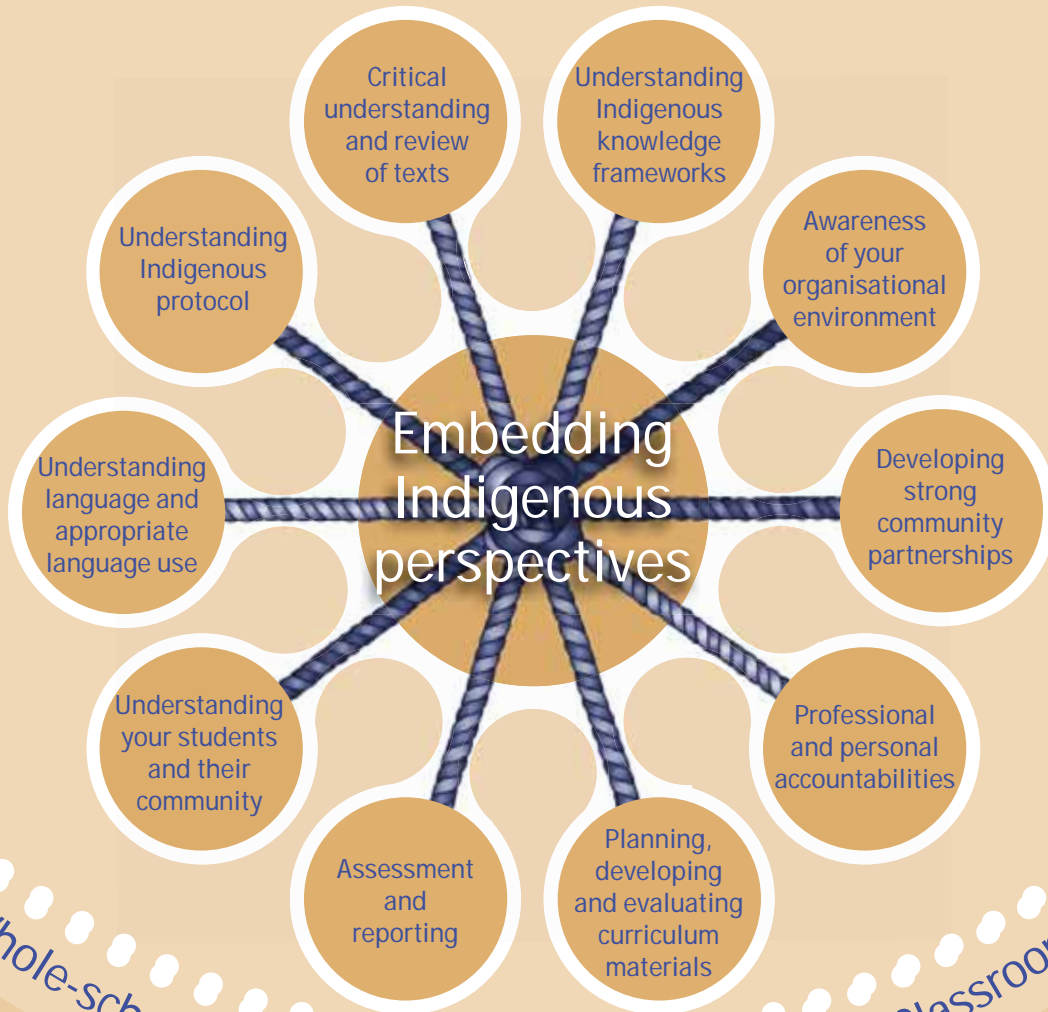
This approach has been adopted with success. Loganlea State High School and Knowledge House, in Logan City, one of the biggest Indigenous populations in the South East region (12.2%), uses this most effective practice model. Refer to the *Dare to Lead* article for more information on this best practice model.<sup>2</sup>

Loganlea State High School trebled its Indigenous enrolments by following holistic learning and the delivery of place-based learning, *nyumba bugir anga* — a 'three-way' process known as PLACE; FACE; SPACE (Davis et al. 2008).

*I love my community, we are a strong community, our culture is strong ... Last year we had 50 Indigenous students and families attending school (student population is 700 students), now we have over 100, coming from bad habits to go further.*  
*KD, DURITHUNGA, Student Leader*

<sup>2</sup> [www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&p=STORY\\_Loganlea\\_State\\_HS\\_QLD](http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&p=STORY_Loganlea_State_HS_QLD) [accessed 13 May 2010]

Personal reflections



Whole-school ethos

Classroom ethos

## School: Loganlea State High School

The Knowledge House at Logan City, South East Queensland, is an example of the third cultural space in an urban context. It is a valued and recognised space for cultural infusion. It exists as a powerful process for community, school staff and students to access, promote and bring to life the ideal of lifelong learning. Knowledge House does this in reality by the processes it has embedded. Central to this process is the notion of multiple perspectives for complex challenges, sitting and yarning with people to get the best forward traction.

Community involvement in curriculum planning and development, valuing the social and cultural context of the learner and acknowledging the power that exists in Indigenous communities goes some way to moving schools from the traditional silo model, a separate institute of power and control, to laying the foundations for community hubs of learning which value and promote lifelong learning for all.

*Teachers who don't have the knowledge come and find out what they don't know ... They come and we invite them to come to Knowledge House ...*  
*Belinda Wilson in Davis et al. 2000*

## School leadership and educational leadership

*We don't see the world as it is. We see the world as we are* (Gandhi).

*Principals seek to evoke a passion for learning and believe that every child is important and every school day makes a difference to the achievement of outcomes.* (Leadership Matters)

The EATSIPS guide supports principals as leaders in developing intercultural capabilities by providing strategies that allow individual and whole-of-school reflection and action across professional and personal accountabilities, curriculum and pedagogy, community engagement and organisational environment.

### Actions for school leaders

- Advocate for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their school as part of the implementation of the Australian Government's *Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage: the Challenge for Australia* policy and *The Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2009–2012*, across the school and school community.

- Come to intimately know the framework and its underpinning philosophy.
- Support good practice and facilitate change where necessary across the whole school environment.
- Articulate a position of quality teaching and high expectations for Indigenous students.
- Lead and take part in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their schools' philosophy and practice.

### Strategies

Strategies that may assist school leaders, particularly principals, in this process include:

- participation in the Stronger Smarter Institute<sup>3</sup>
- seeking advice from EATSIPS officers in your region<sup>4</sup>
- seeking advice from Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU) staff
- linking to other national programs such as *What Works*<sup>5</sup>
- ensuring active participation/involvement of heads of department, heads of curriculum and deputy principals.

### School values

A school reflects the collective values of the individuals in the school, the school leadership and the community in which it is located. It does this through day-to-day activities, particularly in the ways in which it communicates its ethos to the people who work in the school and to the community. This can be done, for example, through newsletters, the school prospectus or handbook, and the uniform. The dominant values embedded within the schooling system in Australia are drawn from Western cultures; even schools with high proportions of Indigenous students may find that the school organisational environment reflects Western values more strongly than Indigenous Australian values.

As a part of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, school staff will look at the ways in which the school reflects the values of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Developing and redefining values is a slow process. It requires a shift in mindsets and a commitment to work explicitly to build a sense of pride in Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's values, beliefs and perspectives.

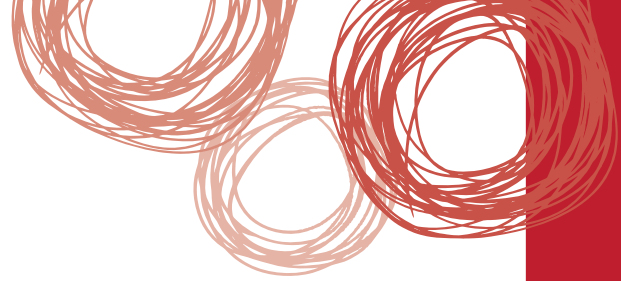
<sup>3</sup> [www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au/](http://www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au/) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>4</sup> [www.learningplace.com.au/ea/issu-csq](http://www.learningplace.com.au/ea/issu-csq) [accessed 14 May 2010]

<sup>5</sup> [www.whatworks.edu.au](http://www.whatworks.edu.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]







# The EATSIPS framework

This section introduces the components of the EATSIPS framework and shows how the framework aligns with existing school and classroom processes and practices.

## Components

The three components of the framework are:

### Personal reflections

- Reflecting on knowledge and understanding of personal histories, attitudes and perceptions, building a sense of self and knowledge and understanding about others and the impact they have on each other; for example, reflecting personally and professionally using a holistic planning and teaching framework.

### Whole-school ethos

- Looking at ways in which the school reflects the value of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples; for example, acknowledgment of Country and school planning process.

### Classroom ethos

- Looking at ways in which teachers use their curriculum and pedagogy processes and practices to provide a balanced inclusive curriculum; for example, cooperative planning and yarning circles.

## Benefits

The framework helps Indigenous students to be stronger and smarter in their journey through lifelong learning. However, it is focused on improving learning for all students and delivers benefits to the whole school and community.

Benefits for school leadership and teachers:

- increases cultural competence, including the capacity to interact effectively with people from other cultures
- creates opportunities to provide representations and challenge:
  - dominant viewpoints
  - media representations
  - negative stereotypes
  - racism.

Benefits for students:

- enhances a strong sense of self-identity and pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with an understanding of how attitudes and perceptions are formed and how to respond to negative attitudes
- provides non-Indigenous students with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoints.

Benefits for the Indigenous community, parents and carers:

- increases opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community decision-making and engagement in the school.

## Whole-school ethos

The EATSIPS implementation plan below is designed to complement the planning processes of developing key improvement strategies, performance measures and targets for Indigenous education in Queensland schools. This process is explored further in Section 6.

## Planning processes

The *School Planning, Reporting and Reviewing Framework For Queensland State Schools – 2010* details the school improvement processes of planning, reporting and reviewing to be enacted in Queensland state schools to implement state and national reforms, and to ensure improved learning outcomes for all students.

Short term — operational plans and budgets are developed in consultation with, and endorsed by, the school's Parents and Citizens Association/ School Council.

Long term — strategic plans — this process involves collaborative planning with the whole school community on how it will improve student achievement, monitor school performance and provide direction for the operational planning.<sup>6</sup>

Many school Parents and Citizens Associations may not have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented, therefore engaging and consulting with other existing Indigenous community organisations within the local area outside the school may also be necessary. Operational plans and strategic plans need to reflect the whole school community.

Figure 1: Operational Plan (OP)

<sup>6</sup> [www.education.qld.gov.au/strategic/accountability/pdf/spr-framework.pdf](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/strategic/accountability/pdf/spr-framework.pdf) [accessed 13 May 2010]

Indigenous Education		
Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Implementation Plan		
Strategic Intent		
	Goals	Targets
Organisational Environment		
Community Partnerships		
Curriculum and Pedagogy		
Personal and Professional Accountability		

Indigenous Education		
Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Implementation Plan		
Implementation		
Key Improvement Strategies and Significant Projects	What (Difficult)	How (Resources)
	The all staff and program leaders to complete the key improvement strategies	The budget resources (Creating Learning Centre)

Figure 2: EATSIPS Implementation Plan

Implementation process and planning tools designed and developed by Penny Hamilton 2008.







# What are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives?

This section shows how the framework has been designed to help leadership teams and teachers reflect on personal knowledge and the effects perspectives may have on student learning expectations and outcomes.

## Defining perspectives

What are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives?

- Perspectives are ways of seeing the world. Perspectives affect the way we interact with the environment and the perceptions we have about ourselves, our culture and the way we see others.
- Personal and family experiences, group and religious affiliations, linguistic understandings, media, text and visual representations, cultural beliefs and values all contribute to individuals' perspectives or standpoints.
- Perspectives are not limited to a particular way of viewing or experiencing the world from one specific group or cultural perspective. Individual and collective identities contribute to the various perspectives we hold.

In many areas, localised Aboriginal culture is closely aligned to nature and the environment, with particular emphasis on cycles and patterns and the effect each has on the other. It is based on an undeniable link to the land, language and culture.<sup>7</sup>

These links also affect perspectives. For example, close ties to *Country* by some Aboriginal cultural groups affect the way the land is perceived and

treated; not as a commodity or resource, but as an extension of the group and something to be nurtured.

In some areas, a unique localised culture and language has developed out of the historical union of many different Aboriginal groups. Communities developed from missions, government settlement and reserves have a rich cultural heritage and tradition based on oral histories, shared beliefs and values, and individuals. These communities, therefore, may have developed a wider perspective of cultural diversity than other Indigenous communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain cultural identity whether in urban, rural or remote locations, and engage in a range of cultural practices. For example, Indigenous housing cooperatives and health services are recognised strength nodes (Dillon & Westbury 2004) in all contexts, from urban to remote.

Within urban settings these sites become safe spaces within a dominant Western society to reconnect and be provided with safe opportunities. These will differ depending on personal experiences and background.

Some collective perspectives and knowledge are shared among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whereas individual and family experiences and local history also influence individual perspectives. Although many books and education materials will provide an 'Indigenous perspective', these generalisations are often misleading and inappropriate, causing the homogenisation of Indigenous peoples.

<sup>7</sup> Queensland Studies Authority 2001, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Senior Syllabus*:

[www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/8848.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/8848.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]

Education Queensland *The holistic learning and teaching framework*:

[www.education.qld.gov.au/learningplace/onlinelearning/courses/courses-hptf.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/learningplace/onlinelearning/courses/courses-hptf.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]

[www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/services/cultural-local.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/services/cultural-local.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]

## Rethinking perspectives

It is not a one-way view of the world

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are inclusive of non-Indigenous peoples' perspectives.

Perspectives on Australian history, local and national developments should not be viewed as separate to Indigenous perspectives on Australian history. Each event and circumstance has impacted on another, for example, colonisation has impacted on Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples have impacted on local and regional development.

EATSIPS encourages schools to rethink the ways in which Indigenous perspectives are conceptualised, and in particular, the way in which Indigenous perspectives have been positioned as something that exists at the margins of mainstream education policy and programs.

Consider the following:

- The majority of principals, school leaders and teachers within schools are non-Indigenous, possibly with limited experiences of working with or socialising with Indigenous people.
- Non-Indigenous perspectives are filtered through Western ways of knowing and doing.
- The majority of history written about Indigenous peoples has been recorded and researched by non-Indigenous people.
- The majority of mainstream media representations of Indigenous peoples are mediated by non-Indigenous people.
- Most Indigenous education resources and programs existing today have been developed and delivered by non-Indigenous people.

Teachers and schools need to consider the implications of a non-Indigenous perspective for an understanding of both the nation's past and ongoing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and how these perspectives impact on what is taught and learnt in the school environment.

Recognising the shared effects that history and events have on the various parties, and the place of Indigenous Australians within the educational context, will assist in shaping and designing an education system that is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives. It will also assist teachers to present diverse cultural knowledge, experiences and attitudes in a positive way.

As part of the EATSIPS process, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff are encouraged to redefine the way they consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, to challenge their own attitudes and perceptions, and to become a part of a lifelong learning process in working together in a mutually respectful way for the benefit of all students.

Current practice and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of thinking is seen through the holistic planning process designed from a Djirribal<sup>8</sup> perspective. This, alongside processes like Yarning Circles (Bennett 2004) and Indigenous Knowledge Principled Processes (Sheehan 2001), provides ways where we learn through Aboriginal culture not about Aboriginal culture — an important shift.

## Personal histories

Reflecting on personal knowledge — my history, my beliefs, my attitudes

Consider three distinct areas when reflecting:

1. the personal histories of Indigenous Australians
2. the personal histories of the local area
3. the personal histories of non-Indigenous Australians.

The task for schools is to identify and articulate the different perspectives of staff on issues (events, knowledges or people) and the impact of these.

Reflection questions

- 1 Why do I hold particular perspectives?
2. How were my perspectives formed?
3. Who and what influenced these perspectives?
4. Where and how do they impact on my work within the school and community?
5. Do I need to rethink my position on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in my school's policies and teaching and learning processes and practices?

Discussions should be guided by the following premises.

### 1. The personal histories of Indigenous Australians

Personal histories of Indigenous peoples are not representative of a type of knowledge, often labelled as 'traditional knowledge', or a type of history, 'cultural conflict' or 'white or black'. They are individual perspectives or positions on personal histories that have been produced through multi-

<sup>8</sup> The Djirribal frame – the Holistic Planner – is designed by Uncle Ernie Grant a Djirribal man. It is a teaching and learning tool which enables educators to see and understand issues or themes or plan from a Djirribal perspective (Grant 2000).

layered and multidimensional interactions, personal experiences and events.

The following points contribute to personal histories:

- Since colonisation, the space that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have occupied and interacted within Australia is complex.
- Indigenous history and Australian history have often been positioned as separate.
- Much of the written media about, or on, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is written through a Western framework for a Western purpose.
- The construction of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the manipulation of Indigenous knowledges (editing, selection) has influenced the way Indigenous people have interpreted who they are and who they ought to be.
- Personal histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are based on experiences and influences from both Western and traditional knowledge systems.
- Experiences and influences are complex, interrelated and individual, and are collective narratives of the past mediated by individuals and communities.

Martin Nakata (2007) describes this well:

*Even in the way we now understand ourselves, we define ourselves primarily in our difference to others and the descriptions and characteristics of this difference have been firmly developed within Western knowledge tradition.<sup>9</sup>*

## 2. The personal histories of the local area

The personal history of the local area impacts on the understanding of the local environment and the attitudes and perceptions of local Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people, and of the school's position in the local area.

The local environment/region contains evidence of ancestors, of creation times, of time before time, of the relationships between the sky, landforms, waterways, plants, animals and people, of relationships between other Indigenous groups, of language use over time, of colonisation, loss, change, life stories, family histories and current realities. A rich tapestry of knowledge exists to describe the local area from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives that extend back generations, through more than 120 000 years of occupation.

<sup>9</sup> Nakata 2004, p. 198.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within Queensland have had differing levels of contact with each other. This contact created a shared history of the local area that continually impacts on the peoples, the landscape and the school.

### It is important to consider

How colonial history has impacted on an understanding of traditional custodianships and access to lands:

- struggle for land rights
- oral history and written record inconsistencies
- disputes over language boundaries and traditional custodianship rights.

At times, confusion around these issues has contributed to a breakdown of some relationships within the local community.

This complex history impacts on attitudes and perceptions of:

- Indigenous peoples to non-Indigenous people
- non-Indigenous people to Indigenous peoples
- traditional custodians to other Indigenous peoples.

A limited understanding of the local history makes it impossible to fully understand the current local context and position of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. A clear understanding will create a strong picture of how the school was developed within this complex history, and how it is perceived by various peoples.

Schools will benefit from understanding the family relationships within the local Indigenous community, their particular associations to the Country where the school is located and their association to their traditional lands. These issues should be considered and sensitively negotiated by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. When implementing EATSIPS, it is important to consider at all times how this history impacts on the school processes, individual and collective beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, and Indigenous peoples' participation in the school.

### 3. Personal histories of non-Indigenous peoples

The framework supports non-Indigenous educators as professionals to reflect on their understanding of their own history and cultural perspectives, as this will assist in understanding how personal attitudes and perceptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are formed. It helps to reflect on personal behaviours and how they impact on Aboriginal people, particularly students. Cultural backgrounds, religious belief, family histories and individual experiences (including those with Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander peoples) will also impact on the attitudes and perceptions of Indigenous peoples.

Non-Indigenous people have various stories and narratives that represent a collective world view of mainstream Australia. Non-Indigenous people represent many cultural backgrounds and countries of origin other than Australia. These countries, including the religious and cultural values, continue to influence individuals and families.

These factors contribute to the diversity of non-Indigenous cultural histories and may also reveal:

- class difference and privilege, which may be based on the acquisition of land
- negative interactions with Indigenous people during non-Indigenous settlement of the local area
- racist attitudes held by family or the wider community
- activism and support on Indigenous land rights
- influence/acceptance of Indigenous values, cultural practices and languages.

Prior to European contact (colonisation), Australia was once a multicultural country, with over 200 self-sufficient nations, with strong governance and social structures. While deemed multicultural today, Australia has a predominantly Western-based culture and knowledge base, which is often labelled as European or English-based (influenced by Christianity), but with many minority groups, including Indigenous Australians and Australians from all parts of the world.

### Attitudes and perceptions

*Perceptions are how one sees the world, and how information and knowledge about the world are processed and constructed. This world view both limits and creates possibilities for learning. Many dimensions of an individual's background such as cultural, linguistic and social, influence personal perceptions. Attitudes are the emotional reactions and physical responses to the world. They are both conscious and unconscious, being tied to strong emotions and patterns of behavior. Negative attitudes and perceptions of Indigenous peoples are entrenched into the fabric of Australian society, and continue to influence the way teachers work with Indigenous students. In order to change the current status of Indigenous student success in the schools, we must firstly seek to label, reveal and reframe the root cause of these attitudes and perceptions. This is at both an individual and collective (or institutional) level (Dreise 2004).*

Attitudes refer to the opinions and responses people have to a variety of circumstances, others and themselves. They include physical and emotional positions, either conscious or unconscious, that are present, especially while interacting with others. These attitudes are active in daily life and can affect individuals (self and others) in positive or negative ways.

Perceptions in this context refer to the world views of individuals. They consider the way knowledge is gained, mediated and constructed, and how situations, events and peoples are understood.

Personal histories impact on attitudes and perceptions, so too attitudes and perceptions impact on personal histories.

Attitudes and perceptions affect a person's ability to learn. For example, if students view the classroom as an unsafe and disorderly place, they are unlikely to engage in learning. Similarly, if students have negative attitudes about classroom tasks, they will probably put little effort into those tasks. In this case, a key element of effective teaching is helping students to establish positive attitudes and perceptions about the classroom and about learning.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> These examples have been taken from McCrel



Indigenous student attitudes will be diverse and reflect a range of responses to their world, including attitudes and perceptions towards:

- land, waterways and the environment
- school and school staff
- others (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)
- themselves (for example, body image and personal identity)
- culture
- family
- personal relationships.

In the same way, attitudes and perceptions of school leaders, teachers, support workers and parents will impact on the EATSIPS process. Professional and personal accountability of the EATSIPS framework requires individuals to be willing and committed to a learning journey. If attitudes and perceptions impact on learning, then one must reflect on these attributes, and how their personal history has informed these, to enable genuine participation in the process.

## CASE STUDY

### Reflecting on personal knowledge: One teacher's journey – Robyn Gooley

'The personal history – my history, my beliefs, my attitudes.

Throughout my personal life, I had very little experience of, or contact with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. What I had constructed in my mind came from mainstream media, family and the Western education system that excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, traditional or contemporary. The implications for me as an individual and educator really meant that I had:

- a limited understanding and knowledge of Australia's shared history
- no insight into, or understanding of, the Indigenous language and its impact
- no knowledge and understanding of the significance of local history
- little or no understanding of Indigenous protocol.

When I arrived in Yarrabah, building my knowledge and understanding allowed me to very quickly engage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids. Community people and colleagues wondered how I managed to do this after only a limited time at the school. They asked, "why are those kids talking to you, they normally only talk to teachers after a month?"

My response was, "my tactile teaching strategies allow the kids to learn their way".

I have continued to build on my professional capabilities and personal knowledge beyond my initial experiences at Yarrabah by educating myself and building relationships with Indigenous people and culture at a local level in a number of school settings. I have actively participated in the EATSIPS Committee (see Section 6), and I recently accepted a leadership position at the Indigenous Knowledge House in Logan City. I now share responsibilities with a dedicated team, including an Indigenous teacher aide, tutor and representatives of the Indigenous community.

I now know that it's essential to work within the cultural context and to listen to the perspectives of the local community. I have come from "a place of not knowing". My intentional journey has led me to a place where I seek to understand other perspectives to become the best possible teacher I can be.

My advice to all other educators is, while I have taught in multiple settings within Queensland, I believe that, as an educator, it doesn't matter where and who you teach, understanding your students and their community is part of your professional and personal accountability. You have to keep growing as an individual and constantly remind yourself of your own cultural capacity.'



# Whole-school ethos

## Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives: the four action areas

The EATSIPS framework focuses school planning and change around four action areas (*professional and personal accountabilities; community engagement; organisational environment; and curriculum and pedagogy*) underpinned by two reflective attributes (*personal histories and attitudes and perceptions*).

Through a focus on each of the four action areas and an increased consciousness of the influence that the reflective attributes have on these, schools can work towards embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. The aim is to embed Indigenous perspectives to a level where they become an integral part of the school's philosophy and practice.

Each action area is focused around specific strategies for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the ethos of the school and the school community. Implementing EATSIPS requires schools to work holistically and simultaneously across a number of areas of the school in developing sustainable practices and increased outcomes across a range of targets.

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives is often seen as a curriculum issue. EATSIPS targets strategies far broader than the curriculum and provides opportunities for systemic change across the whole school and community environment.



Curriculum and pedagogy form a part of the four action areas of EATSIPS. However, each area is essential in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. The other action areas include community partnerships, organisational environments, and professional and personal accountability.

The philosophical position of EATSIPS is visionary and seeks to move schools into a process whereby reconciliation is a lived and experienced reality.

## Professional and personal accountabilities

*Within the possibilities of schooling, it is teachers and their practices that have the most effect on student learning* (Lingard et al. 2003).

Department of Education and Training employees are professionally accountable for including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within their professional practices. It is important that teachers and leaders commit to leadership roles within their school to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are woven into the fabric of the school environment. This collective professional accountability will support the EATSIPS process.

However, this professional accountability will not enable a person to fully engage in the EATSIPS process. It may, in fact, be the starting point for many, or an institutional recognition of what they are already doing. Individual staff members need to be open to this process, personally committed and accountable for their own actions.

The EATSIPS process involves reframing non-Indigenous staff attitudes and perceptions about Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous staff attitudes and perceptions about Indigenous peoples. This also extends to the school community through partnerships and engagement processes that will assist in altering the attitudes and perceptions of staff, students and the school community over time.

This reframing process invites school leaders, teachers and education workers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to consider their own background and experiences, and to reflect on their personal attitudes and perceptions in relation to their own personal history.

The reframing of attitudes and perceptions has been described as *cultural baggage or unpacking whiteness*. Chris and Grace Sarra, in their reflections on the powerful shifts in Cherbourg State School and the current Stronger Smarter Institute, link transformational shift in relation to high expectations and understanding the social and cultural context of the learning environment. Grace Sarra says that understanding cultural baggage is *'our responsibility'* as teachers.

*We need 'to be aware of our own social and cultural baggage we bring to the classroom'* (Sarra 2008, p 17).

This process of understanding our *cultural baggage* is about examining what it means to be privileged on the basis of physical appearance, and through belonging to a dominant mainstream culture. Attitudes and perceptions developed through personal histories and cultural perspectives (critical cultural theories) are explored, unpacked and reassessed. This process extends from personal journeys to systemic racism, misrepresentations and omissions of Indigenous peoples in texts, media, policy, practices and institutions.

Implications for your school involve developing a deep personal reflection on:

- attitudes to, and perceptions about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- privilege based on belonging to the dominant culture
- underlying values and beliefs and how they might have developed into attitudes and perceptions
- the influence these may have in the way school staff interact with each other, students and the community.

Working to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives provides opportunities to commence this process with systemic support. As this process is ongoing, it is important for school leaders to monitor the process appropriately, respond to negative attitudes and perceptions as they arise, support staff in their personal revelations, and enhance the opportunities for positive actions to occur.

## Strategies

- Examining personal histories — when individuals examine their own position in today's society and the influences from their past and their family's past, they can acknowledge, understand and respect the impact that personal histories have on the different positions — work-related, economic, social, political — that people have within Australian society today.
- Journal keeping — enables individuals to reflect on where they have come from and where they are now. Journals can also help to create the capacity for self reflection needed for changing attitudes and perceptions created through a dominant paradigm.
- Focus groups — joining or creating a focus group for professional and personal accountabilities assists school staff in sharing journeys at a personal level. It also assists in building relationships and extending individual learning through sharing of experiences and responses. Reconciliation groups can also assist in this process.
- Professional commitment which is ongoing and systemically sustained — establish processes for staff to showcase their professional (and personal) learning journey. In one-to-one meetings, staff can be provided with opportunities to share where EATSIPS has impacted on their professional role within the school.

## Curriculum and pedagogy

The curriculum and pedagogy action area supports teachers and is focused around the classroom context of the school. Curriculum is all the planned learning that is offered and enacted by a school.<sup>11</sup> Pedagogy is the function or work of a teacher; it is the art of teaching and the various instructional methods used in the learning and teaching process. Current educational terminology describes pedagogy as a critical component of the curriculum.

Curriculum is much more than a syllabus, which outlines what is to be taught. It is dynamic and encompasses the:

- learning environment
- resources
- teaching approaches and strategies
- assessment programs and methods
- values and ethos of the school

- relationships and behaviours among students and teachers.<sup>12</sup>

These elements are interconnected and provide the experiences that contribute to student learning. Each of the four components of the EATSIPS framework (professional and personal accountabilities, community engagement, organisational environment, and curriculum and pedagogy,) and the reflective attributes (attitudes and perceptions; and personal histories) are either included in, or impact strongly on, the curriculum offered by the school.

The *P–12 Curriculum Framework* is the overarching framework that captures the curriculum requirements from Prep to Year 12. It outlines the intended curriculum learning requirements of the early phase, middle phase and senior phase of learning as specified in the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines; Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (1–9) Essential Learnings*, and in the Queensland Studies Authority's senior syllabuses, nationally endorsed training packages and nationally accredited vocational education and training courses.

Using the EATSIPS framework still enables staff to adhere to policy, principles and guidelines found in the *P–12 Curriculum Framework* whilst working towards systemic change through implementing the *Closing the Gap* policy and *The Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan* and associated strategies.

The *P–12 Curriculum Framework* clearly articulates high expectations for all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, valuing the resources they bring from their home and communities.

A curriculum for all promotes:

- learning environments that value and respond to diversity
- use of a range of resources appropriate to students' learning needs, and that reflect students' identities
- relationships and behaviours between students, and between teachers and students, that are fair and respectful.

These principles focus on equity and begin with planning with a consideration of students' prior knowledge, interests and concerns, aspirations and needs, and gifts and talents. This provides a basis for motivating and engaging students in learning, and targeting teaching to maximise each student's achievements.

<sup>11–12</sup> *P–12 Curriculum Framework, Policy, Principles and Guidelines for Queensland State Schools*, Education Queensland 2008 [www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/docs/p-12-policy.pdf](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/docs/p-12-policy.pdf) [accessed 13 May 2010]

The *P–12 Curriculum Framework* and the intended curriculum, including the Essential Learnings (1–9), provide great opportunities for teachers to work towards embedding Indigenous perspectives in planning, delivery, assessment, moderation, reporting and evaluation processes. Within this action area, EATSIPS is not limited to content, knowledge and understanding, or ways of working. It extends to the professional and personal accountabilities of the teacher, community partnerships and engagement, and the organisational environment of the class and curriculum.

This component within the EATSIPS model broadly focuses on the intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, experienced curriculum, assessed curriculum, achieved curriculum and reporting. It further considers the unique opportunities and situations that exist in some Queensland schools, and how Indigenous education policy, whole-of-government Indigenous policies (and strategies) and reconciliation plans impact on schools.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives need to be presented to all students. *How* we teach these perspectives is based on an understanding of *why* we teach them. Teachers can be overwhelmed by the extent of possibilities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives offer to a curriculum. By recognising that their role is ‘the facilitator’, as opposed to ‘the expert’, teachers can use this pedagogical approach to frame and support their development and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

EATSIPS encourages teachers to develop habits for embedding Indigenous perspectives into the day-to-day aspects of learning and teaching, including planning, implementing and evaluating work programs.

There are many approaches to incorporate Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum. Generally they are seen as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies *courses or units, key components* within a general unit of study or *knowledge* within a general unit of study. This is the most visible part of implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the school. However, it is often difficult to see what ‘goes on behind the scenes’ in implementing and maintaining a culturally appropriate curriculum.

Whatever approaches to teaching Indigenous perspectives within the classroom are adopted, they cannot be considered to be embedded into the curriculum unless they are consistently and explicitly found within the intended curriculum and the pedagogies used in enactment.

A comprehensive range of strategies can be found at Appendix 2.

## Organisational environment

The action area, organisational environment, refers to the influences on school processes, the systems institutionalised within the school, and the physical surroundings and atmosphere of the school. This action area includes the day-to-day organisational structures and operations within the school. Factors such as timetables, resources, facilities, professional development and program flexibility all impact on the process of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within schools.

Within this component, multiple strategies across six components of the organisational environment have been identified to assist in EATSIPS leading to systemic change within the school. These components include:

- school leadership
- school values
- school organisation and management
- staffing
- resourcing
- physical environment.

### Strategies

Implementing EATSIPS through school processes involves using strategies focused on internal systems that impact on the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the school. Key strategies that may assist in reflecting on school processes and support EATSIPS include:

- Mapping — mapping school processes against opportunities and omissions of Indigenous peoples in the decision-making processes.

- Decision-making — many schools have established an Indigenous/EATSIPS Education Committee to assist in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the school. If this has not occurred, the establishment of an Indigenous education focused committee with strong terms of reference and decision-making structure will be an important strategy.
- Creating awareness — good communication between schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is the key to embedding Indigenous perspectives throughout the whole school environment. Schools can ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is aware of the school's programs and special

events by distributing newsletters and flyers to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, inviting Indigenous education workers (IEWs), community education counsellors (CECs) and community liaison officers (CLOs) to attend school staff meetings, and making Indigenous perspectives a key focus on staff meeting agendas and pupil-free days. A community notice board within the school can also open up good communication between community and school.

A comprehensive range of strategies to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the organisational environment of a school can be found at Appendix 3.

*'The kids, at one time, they'd come to school and it meant nothing. They're coming to school now and know that they're valued. They're not just a number, they are somebody in the school. It's really good, they've got to make a difference for us too, because they know they can come here, outside there's nothing. There are times where our kids fall down — we've got to allow for that — the kids to fall down, get up again and have another go. The support we have together now through the advisory group will do that — that has never happened before. The community now is starting to put responsibility back onto themselves, because they have grabbed hold of it and are saying that it's not all the teachers responsibility — it's ours too'.*

*'The school and community are working in partnership — the community are asking who sits on the advisory group — they now know they have a group of people at the school who will listen, they are asking what teacher can I go and see — it's a big, big, big step for us'.*

Aunty Joan Marshall — Aboriginal advisory group representative, 2009



## Community engagement

This action area, community engagement, is essential for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

The terms 'partnership' and 'engagement' are often used interchangeably. However, in the context of EATSIPS, they are very different concepts. Partnerships refer to the cooperation between people and groups. It refers to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in schools working together for common goals.

Engagement is more of a source for institutional change. It refers to a condition of community partnerships becoming operational within the school. Through this area of EATSIPS, schools and Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities (and individuals) develop genuine partnerships across the school. These partnerships will be different for different reasons, outcomes and benefits. In addition, these partnerships become part of school processes. Commitments and mutual agreements are made and processes are put in place to ensure that partnerships do not have to be redeveloped each time the school staff changes.

In this sense, the commitment of the school to developing strong community partnerships between the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the school results in a long-term commitment for engagement built into the school system.

These partnerships and engagement processes consider various aspects of the school, and will reduce ad hoc requests from schools for community support.

Community partnerships and engagement between the school and local Indigenous communities not only provide teachers with opportunities to form personal relationships based on trust, but also empower community members to engage with schools from their own perspectives. These partnerships are central to developing and implementing 'embedding' strategies successfully, for evaluating how well Indigenous perspectives have been embedded in the school, and to keep up-to-date with current community needs and aspirations.



Successful community engagement is articulated through clear systemic processes that have developed over time, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These processes should be visible in school policy and practices and aligned to the school's annual operation plan. These community engagement processes will involve different members of the Indigenous community — local, regional and state.

School: Spinifex State College – Mount Isa  
– Far North Queensland

The establishment of an Indigenous Education Advisory Group in the school is an example of successful community engagement that has been articulated through clear systemic processes. It has become a valued and recognised space for the whole school learning community. The community and school staff access this space for many reasons. It is a place where all come together to learn, share and grow alongside each other. The advisory group is built on strong principles and processes that promote high expectations and the belief that learning is a lifelong ideal.

## Strategies

The following strategies may assist in the development and maintenance of strong community partnerships and engagement:

- Know your community — assign staff to develop, maintain and disseminate a list of local, regional, statewide and national (where relevant) Indigenous community organisations. Develop a process that allows all staff to contribute to this list to provide regular updates. Include general lists on shared drives and create confidential filing systems for parents, families and Elders.
- Value commitments — many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will work with schools as part of their own commitment to the community as a parent or other family member. Waged Indigenous peoples working for government and some community organisations, including education, will also be able to engage in schools during their own work process. However, schools should develop appropriate systems to engage Indigenous community members and non-profit organisations with agreed pay scales. This includes payment for Welcome to Country, guest speaker programs, artist in residence and general curriculum engagement activities. Appropriate remuneration will depend on individual circumstances, the role or type of engagement and the length of time.
- Manage demand — often Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are in high demand for involvement in the school. Develop partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities by engaging them on a regular or annual basis. Make commitments and establish agreements. This way, capacity of the individuals and organisations develop and can change over time to suit the needs of the school and the organisations engaged. In addition, schools need to establish processes for school staff, particularly teachers, to contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members for planning, delivery and evaluation of units. Processes should involve timely requests and appropriate remuneration. Schools should also have a centralised monitoring system for feedback and updates.



# Classroom ethos

## Curriculum and pedagogy in the classroom

This action area discusses planning considerations, and gives an overview of each of the perspectives to guide planning. Specific strategies associated with planning to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all classrooms and its alignment to the *P–12 Curriculum framework* are illustrated on the diagram on pages 36–37.

### Curriculum planning considerations

The value of the EATSIPS framework is enhanced when teachers and administrators have a clear understanding of *why* we teach Indigenous perspectives and *how* their own planning contributes to broader curriculum aims and priorities. Curriculum planning within schools occurs at several levels: whole-school, juncture, and year levels. Including Indigenous perspectives within those levels will ensure they are embedded in the curriculum.

The student-centred focus considers the curriculum from an Indigenous student's perspective — where they come from. Family histories, language, and culture and practices are valued within the curriculum and seen as the critical starting points for all curricula. Assessment is scaffolded from what students know, to the unfamiliar, then refocused to the family or community context where possible.

### Curriculum planning requirements

All schools are required to develop and maintain up-to-date curriculum plans in consultation with the school community. This planning ensures that assessment, teaching and reporting match the intended curriculum.<sup>13</sup>

Considerations for planning include:

- focusing on content and process
- educating yourself — talk to a wide variety of people, read varied media and materials, watch videos on Indigenous people and culture. Commit to one new resource a week and the task of new learning becomes manageable.

### Planning and developing curriculum materials

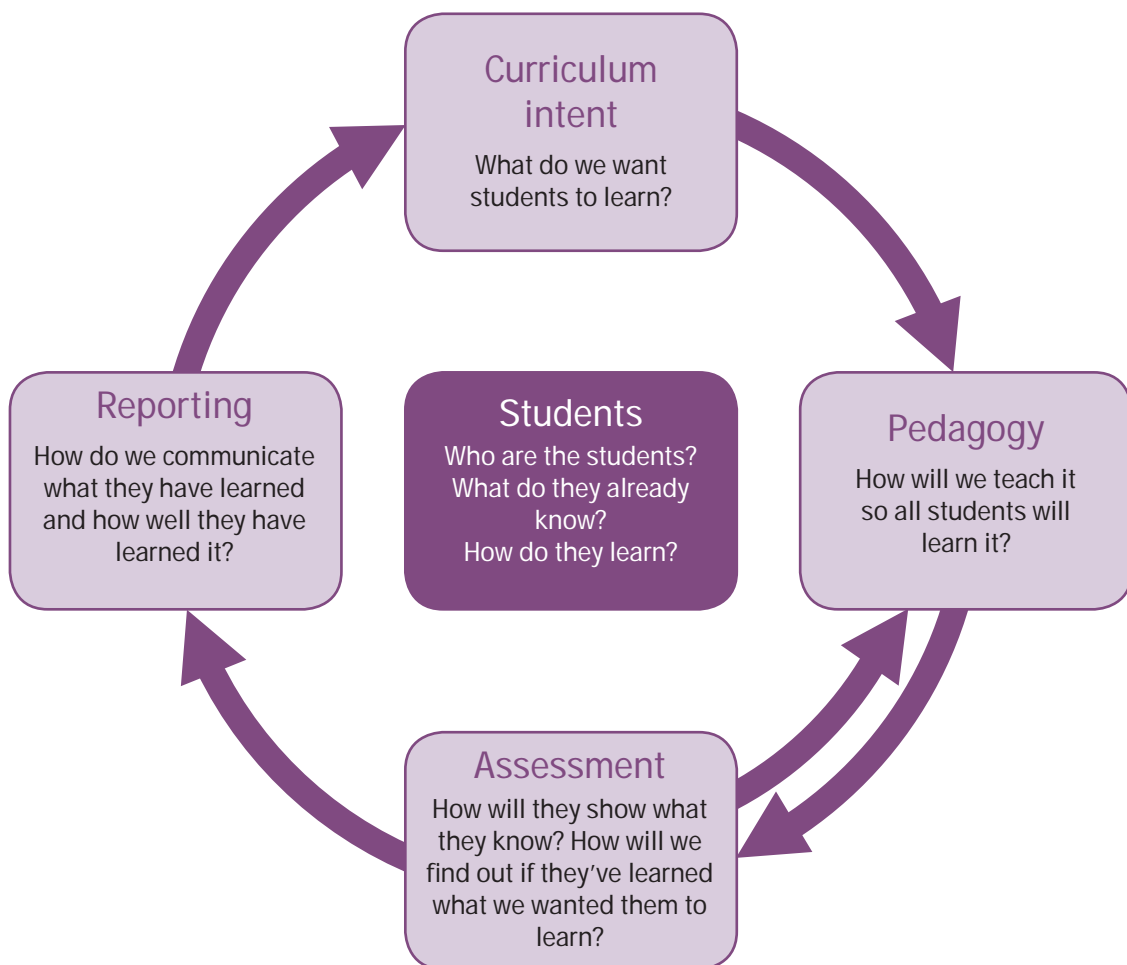
There are many approaches to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum. Generally they are seen as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies *courses or units, key components* within a general unit of study, or *knowledge* within a general unit of study. This is the most visible part of implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the school. However, it is often difficult to see what 'goes on behind the scenes' in implementing and maintaining a culturally appropriate curriculum. Whatever approaches to teaching Indigenous perspectives are adopted within the classroom, they cannot be considered to be *embedded* into the curriculum unless they are consistently and explicitly found within the intended curriculum and the pedagogies used in enactment. Various approaches might include:

- Distinct studies — teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as a focused studies unit or course. The Queensland Studies Authority offers schools the opportunity to select Indigenous studies as a senior authority subject — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Through the Essential Learnings and Year 10 curriculum guidelines, teachers can provide opportunities for Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander studies as a distinct area. Many resources are available for teachers, but, when this approach is taken, strong community partnerships and engagement in the curriculum are needed.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> P–12 Curriculum Framework, Policy, Principles and Guidelines for Queensland State Schools, Education Queensland 2008 [www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/docs/p-12-policy.pdf](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/docs/p-12-policy.pdf) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>14</sup> Queensland Studies Authority 2001, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Senior Syllabus [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/8848.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/8848.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]

- Selective inclusion — this refers to making specific ‘content’ choices for including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the curriculum in various parts of the process. When planning, teachers consider where Indigenous perspectives will be explicitly taught or assessed. This might include examples to illustrate general points or concepts, guest speakers, assessing a particular knowledge or way of working (applying protocols), and applying skills to unfamiliar contexts, such as a local Indigenous cultural context. This approach focuses predominantly on learning ‘about’ Indigenous cultural perspectives and personal histories ‘from’ Indigenous peoples.
- Critical inclusion — this approach focuses on reframing attitudes and perceptions of Indigenous peoples within the class context. It helps to challenge representations, textual and attitudinal, through critical analysis and unpacking of historically developed responses to Indigenous peoples. This approach prioritises Indigenous perspectives in the first part of the unit and refers students back to this new learning. Individual attitudes and perceptions are challenged, and a shared history is exposed.
- Embedded — this approach encompasses all of the above approaches and the many others that exist within curriculum and pedagogical process. The difference is that inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives becomes a part of the curriculum and pedagogical processes in a way where decisions by teachers become less and less conscious and deliberate and more and more automatic.<sup>15</sup>



<sup>15</sup> These areas have been taken from Dreise 2007.

## Questions to guide the planning process

What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are missing from our/my current work programs and units?

Where can the dominant paradigms be challenged and balanced within our programs and units?

## Planning

What is the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective within this unit?

What content with Indigenous knowledge or perspectives will be learnt within this unit?

What procedural knowledge (process of how something is done within an Indigenous community, e.g. protocols) will be learnt in this unit?

What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources will I need to support this unit?

What outcomes do students need to display at the end of this unit (KLA outcomes and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge outcomes)?

How will I assess attitudes and perceptions of students and students' learning?

## Planning and delivery

How will the content with Indigenous knowledge or perspectives and procedural knowledge be taught? What varied ways will I use to reinforce it?

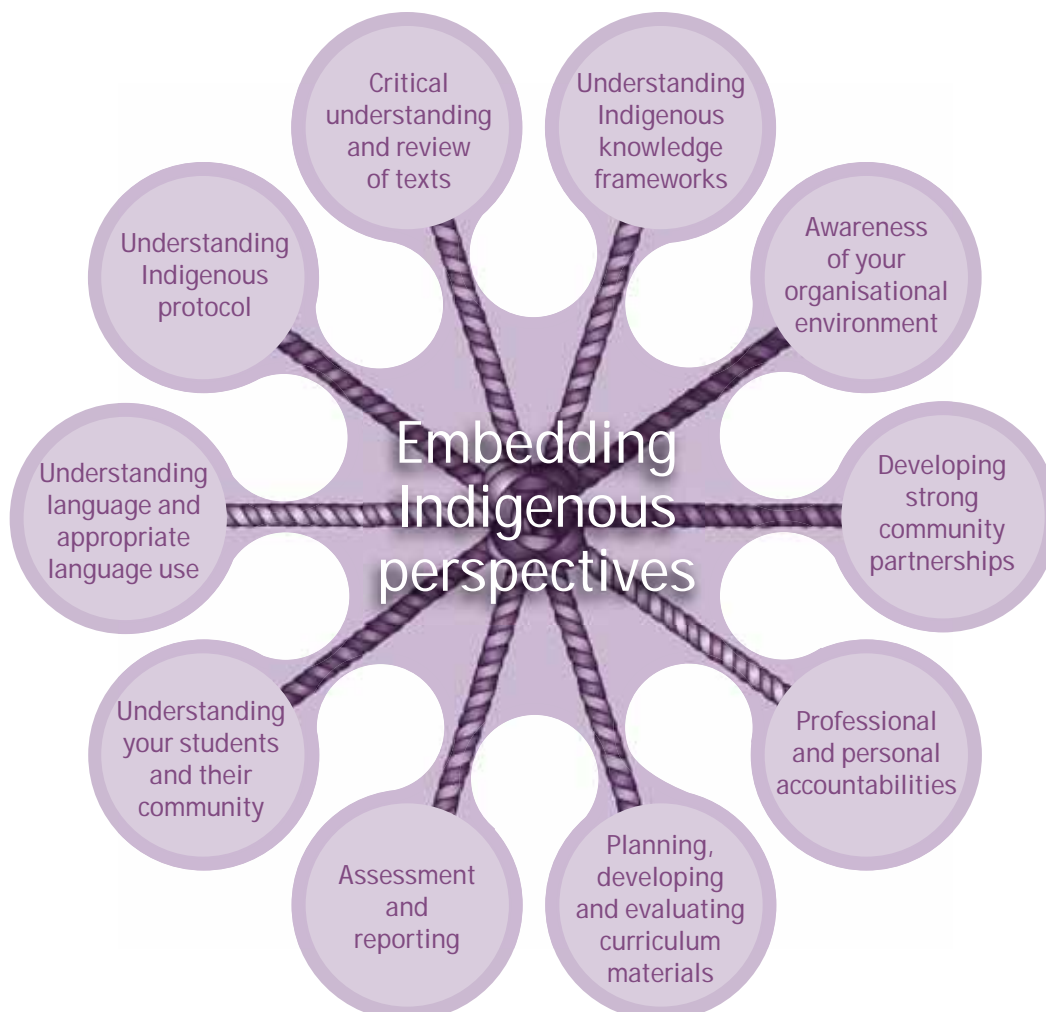
How will the declarative and procedural knowledge be taught? What varied ways will I use to reinforce it?

What do I know about preferred learning styles of the students in my class?

How will students demonstrate their learning?

How will I ensure that the Indigenous knowledge learnt is refined and extended by students within the class?

How will students use the Indigenous knowledge meaningfully in the classroom context, community and in the future?



## Planning, delivery and evaluation

How will I document my pedagogical processes?

How will students document their processes and share success with the community?

How will I ensure that the unit was culturally appropriate and successful?

## Professional and personal accountabilities

A range of attitudes and perceptions around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, issues and perspectives is likely to arise during the process of embedding Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. School staff may be confronted with their own, their students' and the community's negative attitudes, perceptions, ignorance, beliefs and stereotypes. This experience may be challenging and might feel uncomfortable at times. Short-term discomfort, however, may mean that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the school or classroom may never again experience similar discomfort caused by behaviours resulting from inappropriate attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes.

The process may take time to work through with the school community. However, by using correct protocols as well as involving the non-Indigenous community in all stages of the process, dealing with the range of attitudes and perceptions in sensitive ways has the potential to enhance educational outcomes for all students.

### Strategies

- Be aware of the motivations for developing and implementing Indigenous perspectives within school practice, including curriculum and pedagogical practices.
- Understand and work with community protocols.
- Understand the contexts of a diverse range of texts, for example, human, symbolic, media-based, written, audiovisual, visual, oral and personal experience.
- Develop techniques for critical evaluation of texts that consider:
  - the author's perspective and background, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous
  - appropriateness of terminology
  - authenticity, authority and ownership.
- Challenge stereotypes and beliefs about Indigenous people.

- Acknowledge the impact that past and current government policies have played in shaping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies.
- Understand the impact of colonisation.
- Recognise the influences of the media.

### Questions to guide the planning process

What do I know about Indigenous peoples within this content area?

What attitudes and perceptions do I hold about Indigenous people and this knowledge area?

What attitudes and perceptions do my learners and their families hold about Indigenous peoples and this knowledge area? Where do these beliefs come from?

What do my learners know about Indigenous peoples within this content area?

What do my learners need to know about Indigenous peoples within this content area?

What strategies will I use to combat negative attitudes towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within this unit?

How will I make the classroom environment suitable for sharing personal attitudes and perceptions?

What attitudes and perceptions may staff have towards this unit or the knowledge learnt within this unit?

## Awareness of your organisational environment

The school's organisational environment has been discussed in Section 4. Its impact on *curriculum* in the context of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the school requires additional strategies. Sometimes the school organisational environment may hinder embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within classrooms. Timetables, resources, facilities, professional development and program flexibility are all factors that can impact on successful delivery. It is important for teaching staff to discuss their curriculum intentions with school leaders. This will assist with the allocation and provision of appropriate resources and support to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

### Strategies

- Open door policy — maintaining an open door policy where parents and community members can drop in and be a part of the class and school environment will enhance relationships

with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. An open door policy promotes unity within the whole school community.

- Program flexibility — this offers non-Indigenous staff the ability to adjust and redevelop work programs and support materials to ensure Indigenous perspectives are embedded within school practices. From an administrative perspective, curriculum mapping provides a good indication of the explicit nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within current work programs. Indigenous perspectives are complex and dynamic; pedagogy and curriculum should be flexible and responsive to community needs.

### Questions to guide the planning process

What changes in the school environment would assist delivery of this unit?

What barriers may I face in embedding this knowledge into my curriculum?

In what ways will I need the school to support the involvement of Indigenous people within this unit of work?

What similar units have this school and other schools attempted? What can I learn from them?

Are there any sensitive issues that administration may need to know about?

Will I need an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person to work with my class at any point during this unit?

What will inhibit Indigenous engagement within this unit?

What training might Indigenous community members or Indigenous education workers need to support my unit?

What school processes will I need to protect the intellectual property rights of Indigenous people who are working with me?

Where can I find assistance within the department for checking whether the Indigenous knowledge presented in this unit is culturally appropriate?

How will the success of this unit be shared, promoted or publicised?

## Assessment and reporting

This perspective covers the requirements for assessment and reporting from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective.

Assessment and reporting are important parts of implementing Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum at classroom, school and system levels, and need to be an ongoing part of the learning and monitoring process. Three aspects of assessing and reporting student achievement have been highlighted here as critical to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in curriculum. These are:

- (i) assessing the perspectives explicitly taught as part of the intended learning
- (ii) assessing Indigenous students' learning of the intended curriculum
- (iii) enabling assessment to link with real-life experiences and aspirations within Indigenous communities.

Assessment approaches will vary according to task, intended curriculum, skill or knowledge being assessed, the student cohort, and the context. What is important is that, where Indigenous perspectives are incorporated in the curriculum, they are assessed. Assessing them places a greater value on the knowledge and skills students need in this area and, helps to check that concepts have been appropriately understood.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds, content or subject knowledge could be best assessed through the students' own home language.

## Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge frameworks

A curriculum that offers learners an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world views or 'knowledge frameworks' enables students (and teachers) to gain a greater appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous peoples, and the differences and similarities between these and their own experiences and world views. Uncle Ernie Grant<sup>16</sup> of the Djirrabal tribe from the Tully area in Far North Queensland has designed a teaching resource, *Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework*, to assist in explaining and focusing on the world views and historical perspectives and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. *Mura Gubal Gedira* is the Torres Strait Islander Framework administered and delivered by the Torres Strait Islander Regional Educational Council (TSIREC). This provides a unique Torres Strait Islander Framework and terms of reference to develop further understanding from a Torres Strait Islander perspective. [www.tsirec.com.au](http://www.tsirec.com.au) (accessed 8 November 2010)

<sup>16</sup> Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework [www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/educators/cultural-aware-localstory.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/educators/cultural-aware-localstory.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]

## Understanding your students and their community

The local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is the key to knowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within the school. Knowing and understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' individual backgrounds and attitudes to school are important to enable sensitivity and respect to be maintained through the curriculum.

Ask students and community members what they want to see in the curriculum, share the intended curriculum, and work together to come to a good approach that will benefit the school and community and the systemic requirements. It is also important to understand the non-Indigenous students within the school, and the historical relationships these students and their families have had with Indigenous people from the local area. Some issues may need to be addressed with care and sensitivity.

### Strategies

- Dialogue/yarning circles — the use of dialogue circles is an important process within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It has been used by Indigenous people around the world for centuries to build respectful relationships, learn from a collective group, and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge. By using dialogue/yarning circles as a teaching and learning strategy, student understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and ways of working with this knowledge are enhanced. This strategy is suitable for students across all phases of schooling.<sup>17</sup>

## Developing strong community partnerships

Although school systems will develop their own processes for identifying and developing partnerships with the school (including curriculum processes), teachers' professional and personal accountability processes encourage these relationships to be personalised. The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in planning, delivering and evaluating units of work will not only assist in the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, but will create opportunities for cultural exchange between staff and community. Seeking partnerships with a diverse range of people will expose teachers to a variety of positions, standpoints and perspectives.

This rich tapestry of knowledge and personal histories will greatly assist teachers and students in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Personal commitments outside school to attend community events and functions assist in developing partnerships and relationships based on mutual respect. These personal experiences will ultimately influence the lives of teachers and the curriculum.

### Strategies

- Keep up to date with events hosted by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and advertise these in notices or newsletters.
- Include annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events (local, regional and national) on the school's calendar.
- Develop and disseminate a list of local community organisations.
- Support the development of units of work and school programs around community needs.
- Ensure local communities are involved in the explicit teaching of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, respect for Country and the apology to the stolen generation.
- Establish community-school protocols for sharing both cultural and school information.
- Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of units and school projects, particularly those of cultural sensitivity or diverse viewpoints.

'Those schools that have genuine and sharing partnerships with community will guarantee student participation, engagement and therefore outcomes' (Gina Archer, 2010).

### Questions to guide the planning process

What community issues or concerns may arise through the content of this unit?

Who do I need to consult before I start to plan this unit?

Are there any sensitive issues that the community may need to know about?

What Indigenous knowledge of the community needs to be collected, recorded and used in the unit?

Are there any community events that will link with this unit?

<sup>17</sup> [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/approach/3035.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/approach/3035.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]





What effective practices or knowledge frameworks exist within my local community or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities from around Australia?

Who from the Indigenous community will be involved with the planning, delivery and evaluation of the unit?

What role will Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents and Indigenous Education Workers have in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the unit?

How will I establish and maintain contact with Indigenous people during this unit?

What protocols will need to be observed during the planning, delivery and evaluation of the unit?

Will the outcomes of the unit benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or the local community?

## Understanding language and appropriate language use

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children do not have Standard Australian English (SAE) as their first language: SAE is their second, third or fourth language. In some remote areas of Queensland in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may speak traditional language/s as their first (or home) language/s. Many others will speak creoles and related varieties.

These new, 'non-traditional' language varieties, such as Torres Strait Creole, Cape York Creole, Kriol and Aboriginal English/es, are spoken throughout Queensland in remote, regional and urban settings. They vary significantly from place to place, so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can often recognise where someone grew up, or where their family hails from by the way they speak.

Educators should note that speakers of creoles and related linguistic varieties often do not use standardised terms such as *creole* to name their local language speech varieties.

Speakers of creoles and related varieties may describe their local vernacular by referring to:

- a place name where it is spoken, for example, 'Yarrie Lingo' (spoken at Yarrabah), 'I speak Lockhart' etc.
- the type of people who speak it, for example, 'We talk Murri', 'Island' etc.
- a mixed linguistic heritage, for example, 'We talk ApenAp' (half and half), 'We speak Mornington Island English' etc.
- the non-standard characteristics, for example, 'Broken', 'Slang' etc.

In view of how many different descriptions could be applied to the same language variety, educators need to pay particular attention to *how* people around them are talking. They cannot rely on asking for a single name that is understood and used by everyone.

Language = culture. It is important to respect students' first languages — the languages of their home, their family and, sometimes, their entire community. Students' first languages are their means for forming, building and maintaining relationships; developing, growing and living their cultural understandings; learning, conceptualising and knowing about their world. Students' first languages are integral to their sense of self and identity.

Educators need to listen carefully to their students communicating together and, building on good relationships with students, local staff and parents, respectfully start discussing some of the differences they have noted. This should always be from the point of view of interest and never about value judgments, for example, whether students find the educator easy to understand; never finding fault with students' speech patterns. Such an approach will assist in creating shared understanding of local language varieties and shared ways of talking about them.

Standard Australian English is the language of instruction in departmental schools and the language in which fluency is required for schooling purposes, yet many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are only exposed to SAE in classroom contexts. Classroom curriculum therefore needs to reflect the language learning needs of these students by providing explicit language teaching in SAE through accessible and engaging learning experiences.

Language awareness should be promoted in classrooms, providing opportunities for celebrating language diversity and for acknowledging language differences. It is particularly vital that the 'non-traditional' language varieties are recognised as valid forms of communication.

With language awareness as a foundation, it is possible to identify differences between SAE and students' home languages without value judgment. Differences can be discovered, acknowledged, analysed and addressed so as to allow non-SAE speaking students access to the language of instruction in the classroom, and consequently to the curriculum.

Learning another language (variety) is a developmental process which occurs over time. As

part of this language acquisition process, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are learning SAE will often reflect some of the language features from their home language in their attempts at SAE in the classroom. These may be evident in all aspects of their language use, such as the production of specific speech sounds, word endings, phrase and sentence structures, word meanings and cultural uses, including genres. It is vital that students' status as language learners be acknowledged and that their approximations be accepted as a valuable and necessary process in their learning of SAE.

As teachers note and develop their understandings of linguistic differences between SAE and students' home languages, they will be able to predict language features in planned activities or tasks for which students will require explicit language teaching and scaffolding.

Good practice for teaching English language in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian contexts requires:

- language awareness — raising awareness of students' home languages, acknowledging creoles and non-standard varieties as valid, recognising language differences
- familiarising students with the language requirements for units of work or tasks — orally deconstructing a relevant text, then jointly reconstructing it before students write independently
- explicitly teaching features of Standard Australian English that students are finding difficult or are not producing in their speaking or writing
- tracking students' language learning with the ESL Bandscales.<sup>18</sup>

Much information and guidance on these approaches is provided in the *Curriculum Guidelines for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners*.<sup>19</sup>

Approaches that take into account Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students' language and cultural backgrounds, as well as their prior experiences and individual interests, acknowledge educators' responsibilities for making the curriculum they offer accessible, engaging and relevant for all children.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> [www.education.qld.gov.au/students/evaluation/monitoring/bandscales](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/students/evaluation/monitoring/bandscales) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>19</sup> [www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/esl-learners.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/esl-learners.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]  
[www.languageperspectives.org.au](http://www.languageperspectives.org.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>20</sup> For further information on traditional Indigenous languages:

Maps with locations of traditional Indigenous languages: [www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/map.html](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/map.html) [accessed 13 May];  
[www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/ind/languages](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/ind/languages) [accessed 13 May 2010]

Organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups: [www.fatsil.org.au](http://www.fatsil.org.au) [accessed 13 May 2010];  
[www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]; [www.ngapartji.org](http://www.ngapartji.org) [accessed 13 May 2010]

## Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols

Community protocols refer to the ways in which communities and families prefer to interact with each other and with the school. It is important that they are considered in the curriculum, as breaches could impact on developing partnerships, future engagement in the school and at times could bring harm to specific peoples. Protocols can only be fully understood during the process of following (or breaking) them. Advice around protocols should be gained through Indigenous education workers, local community Elders, local Traditional Owner groups, local Elder councils and resources. If in doubt, contact your local Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU) for support.

Basic protocols include:

- making introductions
- establishing open communication
- building positive relationships.

Further resources:

*Protocols for consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people:* [www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-aboriginal/](http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-aboriginal/) [accessed 12 May 2010]

*Mina Mir Lo Ailan Mun – Proper communication with Torres Strait Islander people:* [www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-torres-strait-islander/](http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-torres-strait-islander/) [accessed 12 May 2010]

The Queensland Studies Authority also has support materials on protocols which outline the roles and relationships expected of teachers and students working with Indigenous communities and Indigenous knowledges within an educational context.<sup>21</sup>

## Critical understanding and review of texts

Historical texts and education materials may present dominant cultural views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and events within Australia. It is important to be aware of any myths, distortions and stereotypes they present. It is imperative that teachers develop a critical understanding of texts (including written, verbal and visual) and review them completely before using them in the classroom. Textual representations and viewpoints should be critiqued and analysed in the classroom context to enable students to gain both an appreciation of the need for developing critical literacy skills and a deeper understanding of Australia's Indigenous past and present.

Critiquing of text and literature involves considering:

- the origin of authors or editors
- the time, context and intention of the text
- author perspective or bias
- choice of language
- accuracy of facts and descriptions
- presentation of sacred and personal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and its appropriateness
- stereotypical representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and events
- the balance of the representations of historical events
- exclusions of critical information
- involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within text
- Eurocentric viewpoints.

To build knowledge and understanding about how to critique and analyse text and literature, educators should contact and work with people who have the expertise, such as the Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU) library staff, community people in university settings, Indigenous education workers and teachers.

<sup>21</sup> [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/approach/3035.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/approach/3035.html) [accessed date 12 May 2010 and 13 May 2010]



# Planning with EATSIPS

This section discusses planning considerations, gives an overview of processes to guide planning, and provides insights into planning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

EATSIPS provides a common framework to assist schools in mapping their current practices, identifying gaps, and developing and implementing strategies for improved workforce performance across the four components; professional

and personal accountabilities; curriculum and pedagogy; community engagement; and organisational environment.

Each component within the EATSIPS framework is focused around specific strategies for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the fabric of the school — its philosophy, staff, students, community and the way it delivers an education to all students.

## CASE STUDY

### EATSIPS in action:

#### One secondary school's journey — Rockhampton State High School

Rockhampton State High School is in a regional setting in Central Queensland and is footprinted in Dharambal speaking lands. This school is a Level 3 school with approx 1045 students, with 134 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students — approx 13 per cent identified Indigenous student population. Rockhampton SHS operates the third cultural space known as the Murri Room.

The Murri Room aims to provide a process that is sustained by Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. The Indigenous leaders, workers, elders and students maintain the spirit of the room.

*'I can see through the different subject areas where EATSIPS is giving the teachers and the students a better understanding of the cultures and therefore they are both learning something different and new.'*

*Mrs Donna Warry: Indigenous Education Worker*

The Murri Room is sustained in the school by blending and balancing Western education supports with the Indigenous education portfolio that has been prepared by a committed school staff.

*'The strong leadership and vision of EATSIPS Project Officer Annette Rutherford and her collegial support have been strong enabling factors.'*

*Mrs Michele Moore: Deputy Principal*

The school established an EATSIPS leadership team (Deadly Ones) and, as part of that team, the committee provides teachers with opportunities to build their knowledge, skills and abilities to assist in providing an inclusive education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within the school.

*'The number of teachers approaching me for assistance in locating resources and evaluating the resources they have really shows to me that teachers have taken EATSIPS on board.'*

*Kay Stevenson: Community Education Counsellor and Aboriginal Parent*

EATSIPS and the EASTIPS implementation process provided Rockhampton SHS with an in-depth systemic tool to monitor and gauge the impacts of the positive programming of the Murri Room.

*'EATSIPS has given the school direction for improving networks within and outside the school.'*

*Mr John Allison: Principal*

'Through the process of systemic yarns — the staff identified themselves as operating at around Phase 3 across the four components of the EATSIPS framework. The school's strongest area was organisational environment, operating at Phase 4. See Section 7 for a detailed explanation of the phases across the four components.'

*Annette Rutherford: Project Officer*

Figure 3: How the staff in the Murri Team and the wider school community uses the four components to plan at a whole school level.



## CASE STUDY

### EATSIPS in action: One primary school's journey — Marsden State School

Marsden State School is located in the Logan–Beaudesert district within the South East Region. In 2009, the total student enrolment was 910, with 79 Indigenous students, giving it a nine per cent Indigenous population. According to the data given in the *It's Everybody's Business* package, Indigenous population placed the school at Level 3.

Before working with the EATSIPS process, the school had been engaged in some activities at various levels across the four key component areas of professional and personal accountabilities, community engagement, organisational environment, and curriculum and pedagogy. However, there was no coordinated or whole-school approach.

A team consisting of the deputy principal, the head of curriculum and the mobility support teacher formed an Indigenous Education Committee, with regular input from Aboriginal parents. They reported back to the principal on a regular basis to gain his input and to keep him in the communication loop. Initially, the school was working in the awareness phase but moved into the engaged phase within the first year.

*'Going through the in-depth process allowed us to set clear goals and targets for our school. The process, especially the templates, provided us with a way to map where we were sitting and how we could move forward to the next level.'*

*Chris Czisłowski: Deputy Principal*

*'Working through the EATSIPS process empowered me on a personal level to feel comfortable and confident in helping my community of teachers and parents. It engaged and activated my thinking and transformed my thinking into doing. I could take the information from the EATSIPS document and templates and apply it to my school situation. It started my journey of gaining appreciation and*

*understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.'*

*I have benefited greatly from working with a project officer. As a 29-year-old, I'm not embarrassed to say that I felt naïve about my knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. How could I go through a whole education from Preschool to Year 12 and not have learned anything about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture? The process really helped me to understand and start my own journey. The word embedding now has a much deeper meaning for me.'*

*Natalia Anstee: Mobility Support Teacher*

Marsden State School has made some great gains in the area of community engagement. This is felt not only by the school, but is evident by the increasing parent presence. What we now see at Marsden are parents who go to the office and have conversations. They are willing to contribute to discussions about how the school can provide a better way for their children. 'They feel valued and appreciate having an input', says the deputy principal, Chris Czisłowski.

While the staff members at Marsden State School feel they have made some significant progress in some areas, they know they have a lot of work ahead of them in the areas of professional and personal accountabilities and curriculum and pedagogy. However, they are more confident with knowing that it can be achieved because they have the support of the EATSIPS guide.

According to the Department of Education and Training's targets for EATSIPS, Marsden SS has reached these phases:

- Professional and personal accountabilities – Phase 2
- Curriculum and pedagogy – Phase 3
- Community partnerships – Phase 3
- Organisational environment – Phase 3.

## What changed in the school across the four key areas?

Professional and personal accountabilities	Curriculum and pedagogy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Education Committee started their personal journey</li> <li>• HOC ensured that unit templates included EATSIPS section for teachers to reflect on when planning</li> <li>• Teachers asked to reflect at staff meetings on various topics to do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives</li> <li>• Key teachers asked to attend Indigenous workshops to gain further insight into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, e.g. hidden histories and ESL Bandscales workshops</li> <li>• Indigenous news on the school's intranet for teachers to refer to and to be kept in the loop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives section included in all unit planners</li> <li>• Whole-school mapping to see where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives were included and to what depth, to inform future planning</li> <li>• Murri Time was run each week by the Indigenous education worker with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Years 6 and 7</li> </ul>
Community engagement	Organisational environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, where school personnel sat and gave community space to share</li> <li>• Meetings with parents, not always on school grounds, but at other spaces better suited to community</li> <li>• Creation of a space where parents could come and chat about their children — a space that was identified by the parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of community contacts for teachers to refer to when doing any Indigenous units or key components of units</li> <li>• Human resource of an Indigenous education worker, who started working for 10 hours per week and had her hours increased to 25 hours</li> <li>• Beginning intros and connections with a Logan Elder – Uncle Gene</li> </ul>

## CASE STUDY

### EATSIPS in action: One teacher's practice — Loganlea State High School

Robyn Gooley is an Indigenous education and Year 10 hospitality coordinator. She has prepared a unit of work for use in Term 3 2010, and is starting with the *P–12 Curriculum Framework*, *Year 10 Guidelines* and the EATSIPS guide (classroom level ethos) illustrated below.

Robyn has extensive knowledge about the community and the students she teaches. As hospitality coordinator, Robyn was able to offer school staff the flexibility and freedom to adjust and redevelop their work program and support resources, such as contacts with local community members and through staff at the Knowledge House, to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives were embedded authentically.

Based on their school curriculum plan, and specifically on their plan for the Year 9–10 juncture, Robyn knows which areas of knowledge and understanding they need to focus on. In relation to the perspectives, the teachers work on incorporating them into their planned and assessed curriculum. She was able to identify that a gap existed in her technology/hospitality unit, and that opportunities existed with her work program.

Robyn knows that parents have often had little opportunity to participate in schools. She considered ways in which she could build capacity for the engagement of parents and other community members through continually building relationships from a less formal event, such as producing supper for a cultural evening with her students.

This is an example of how EATSIPS (perspectives) supports the implementation of curriculum that maximises the capacity of all students.



## Curriculum intent

My unit is based on Year 10 Technology and Certificate 1 in Hospitality. The assessable elements are *knowledge and understanding, investigate and produce*. I chose knowledge and understanding to cover in this unit, and thought an appropriate unit context would be for the students to explore local Aboriginal preparation and serving of foods, work with local Indigenous people to produce a supper for a cultural evening, and investigate and present a cultural experience for classmates on a selected culture. Students will investigate and analyse products, processes and services in response to cultural identity, working in a socially diverse environment.

*This is the first unit where we have identified which perspectives we should target, which then help us to implement and maintain a culturally appropriate curriculum.*

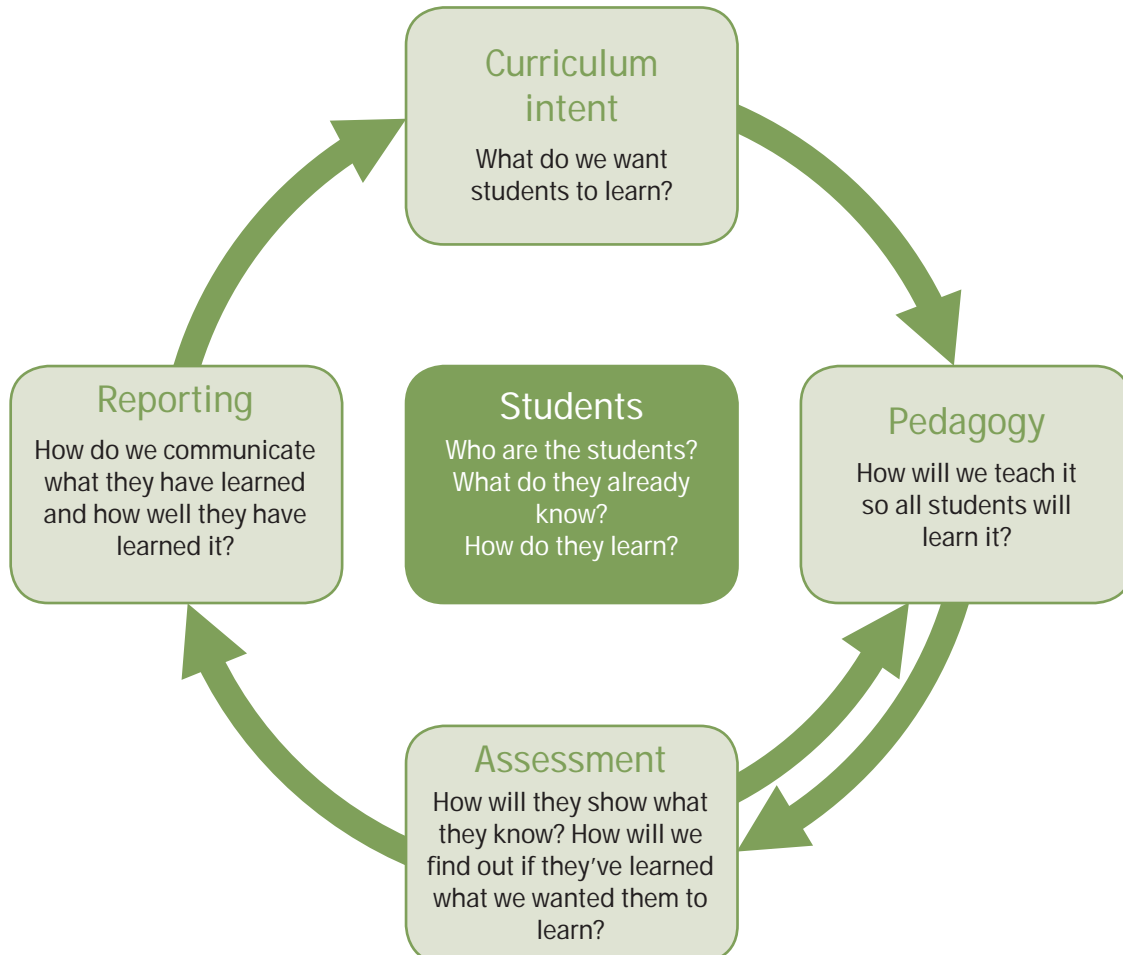
Working through the perspectives, I began to identify the ones which were most relevant to my unit of work. I'm expecting that the students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of Indigenous protocols and valuing of oral traditions.

I will need to consult with Knowledge House staff, school administration and my local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to gain an understanding and knowledge of the protocols and oral traditions within our local context.

## Pedagogy – enacted curriculum

Having high expectations of my students and valuing the knowledge and resources they bring from home and their communities, it's important that the curriculum reflects and values my students' identities. To ensure this, the perspectives that support me to teach this unit are:

- having a good understanding of Indigenous protocols
- continually developing strong community partnerships by planning the unit in consultation with community
- designing the unit to meet the needs of the local community.



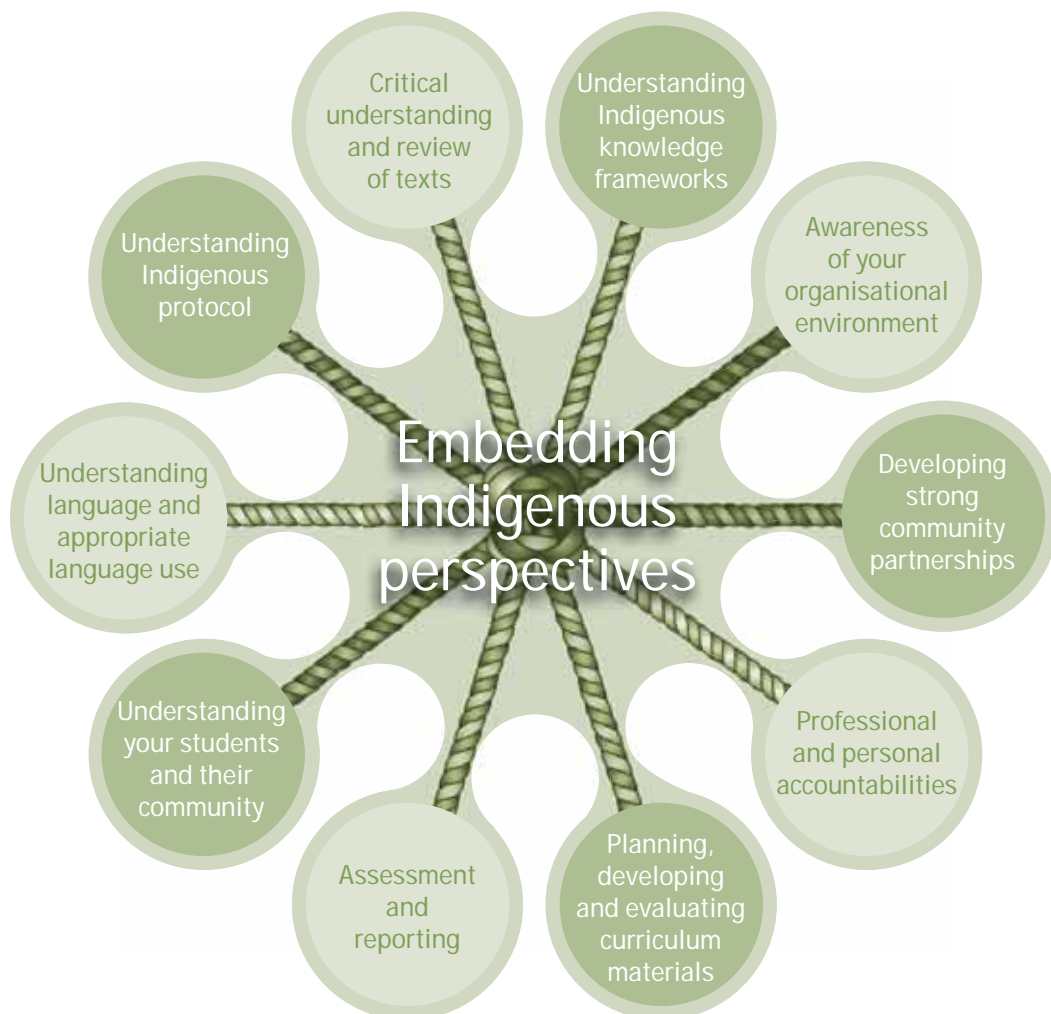


Figure 4: How Robyn uses the perspectives to guide and support her planning

One way that I understand my students is by using the yarning circle process. This teaching and learning strategy helps to build respectful relationships among the students through shared and open communication and an opportunity to learn from a collective group.

While this unit aims to broaden all students' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through technology and food education at the local level, it also provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a learning context that relates directly to them and one that strengthens self-identity and pride.

#### Assessment – assessed curriculum

When designing assessment and literacy demands for this unit, which are *procedural report*, *casual explanation* and *analytical exposition*, I needed to consider the literacy needs of my students as well as, if any, specific issues around culturally fair assessment.

I also needed to make sure that the tasks and questions did not discriminate on the grounds of familiarity of context and language.

#### Reporting

When reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, I consider the ways students demonstrate respect for their culture and the culture of others and the students' skills in thinking critically about social issues. I also report on the ways in which students apply their cross-cultural knowledge and understanding throughout the unit.

When reporting students' progress to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander parents, Elders and communities, I consider the most efficient and appropriate form of reporting to meet my needs, as well as the needs of parents and communities. One way I do this is by working with staff at Knowledge House to seek their assistance in transmitting information where appropriate and discussing student progress.

To guide planning, development and revision of new units of work, schools may choose to audit or map their current curriculum while planning to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum.

Both the EATSIPS components can be accessed in any sequence. Although the processes are not hierarchical, they all need to be considered when planning units of work.





# Measuring change: The implementation process

This section provides advice about how to develop and measure success that is aligned with current mapping practices.

Measuring distance travelled is important to sustain change. The need to set goals, milestones and targets is part of everyday school processes.

Once schools have travelled through the mapping/auditing processes they, along with their Indigenous community, can then write an EATSIPS implementation plan that becomes part of their existing operational plan and strategic plan, as explored in Section 2.

The mapping templates explored in Section 6 allow schools to measure where they were, where they are now, and where they'd like to be.

Several tools have been developed to measure change over time. The staff opinion surveys are also tools for schools to increase knowledge, understanding and abilities of their staff, specifically around Indigenous education. Two specific questions within the survey which will provide some insight are:

1. *Thinking about the requirements of your work situation, how satisfied are you with your knowledge and skills in:*
  - *understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures?*
  - *including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in your work?*

2. *In general, thinking back over this school year, how satisfied are you:*

- *with opportunities to develop skills in teaching about Indigenous cultures?*
- *with opportunities to develop skills in engaging Indigenous students?*

From the survey responses, historically teachers across the state have indicated that, compared with other areas of their work, they are less satisfied with their knowledge and skills in understanding Indigenous culture and their ability to incorporate this into their work (Staff Satisfaction Surveys 2004–2007).

## What does this mean for your work?

Schools need to be capable of and accountable for developing the skills and abilities of their staff.

The following implementation tools are ways in which schools and individuals can measure their journey in improving and adjusting professional capacities over time.

## The implementation process – a strategy for improving outcomes

It is essential that schools and teachers embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the school. Our goal is to maximise the learning outcomes for all children, especially for Indigenous children, as the first Australians.

The EATSIPS framework provides schools with a planning tool and strategies to commence this process. It is essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are considered and attended to in the delivery of the curriculum — specifically through pedagogy — and for this to occur, Indigenous people need to be involved.

The following table is a useful resource for schools attempting to understand when they are actioning and implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and what that might ‘look like’, that is, what is the vision? It also can be used as a starting point for teachers and staff to think about where they sit in terms of their own processes and practices, or that of the whole school. The continuum can be revisited at any point as a measure of distance travelled.

A more detailed continuum across the phases and the implementation process (including all mapping templates) on the Indigenous Schooling Support Unit, Central Southern Queensland (ISSU-CSQ) website.

Schools should identify what level they are at according to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment, as this will depend on what strategies they will need to implement within the whole school environment. This process aligns with the Cross Cultural Awareness Training (It’s Everyone’s Business) strategy outlined in the EATSIPS framework. The process of *embedding* is one that, depending on the type of school, can take any amount of time.

Embedding is ongoing, for example, when new staff members are appointed or there is a change in the student cohort which requires a school to adjust.

#### Education Queensland targets for Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in schools

Phases	1	2	3	4	5
	Uninformed	Aware	Engaged	Mobilised	Actioning and implementing

#### Five levels of schools by Indigenous student enrolment

Level	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage % – identifying as Indigenous students	0	Less than 5	5–19	20–60	More than 60

## Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools

### Implementation checklist with targets

Criteria	Phase 1 Uninformed	Phase 2 Aware	Phase 3 Engaged	Phase 4 Mobilised	Vision — Phase 5 Actioning and implementing
Professional and personal accountabilities	No teachers well informed	All teachers aware	All teachers engaged	Teachers committed to embedding and beginning to embed	All teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know and have an understanding of local Indigenous knowledges</li> <li>• understand their own perspectives, beliefs and perceptions about Indigenous peoples</li> <li>• understand how and where to source information about local Indigenous cultures</li> <li>• know and understand strategies to combat inappropriate beliefs and stereotypes by students</li> <li>• understand the shared history of the local area.</li> </ul>
Organisational environment	Minimal attention given to Indigenous inclusion				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous presence actively involved in most areas of school organisation</li> <li>• School/teachers aware of likely sensitive issues and have appropriate strategies in place to deal with them</li> <li>• A trusting, inclusive school environment established that ensures the Indigenous community is valued and appreciated</li> <li>• Indigenous employees have access to a range of opportunities to support their professional development</li> <li>• Processes in place to recognise and support intellectual property rights of Indigenous people working in schools and classrooms</li> <li>• Protocols and processes in place to check whether Indigenous knowledge presented is culturally appropriate for the local area</li> </ul>
Community partnerships	No Indigenous partnerships				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School partnerships with Indigenous communities developed and maintained</li> <li>• Protocols for communicating and collaborating with Indigenous people established</li> <li>• Indigenous community events acknowledged and actively supported</li> <li>• Local Indigenous people available to support curriculum delivery are known and registered in school contact list, and relationships established with them for that purpose</li> <li>• Indigenous students involved in curriculum planning, delivery and evaluation</li> </ul>
Curriculum and pedagogy	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives barely considered in curriculum, except in an 'exotic' sense (e.g. NAIDOC Week events)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum units of work are culturally appropriate and connected to the local area and histories where possible</li> <li>• All learning styles and backgrounds are attended to in curriculum delivery and pedagogy and in assessment opportunities</li> <li>• Successes shared with community</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives are explicit in delivered curriculum</li> <li>• Written, verbal and visual resources are critiqued to ensure distortions and stereotypes are not presented</li> <li>• Local Indigenous stories and oral traditions are celebrated</li> <li>• Home language of Indigenous students valued and not seen as 'poor English' if a creole</li> </ul>

## How to implement EATSIPS

Implementing EATSIPS involves a holistic strategy to support schools in institutional change. The flow chart below demonstrates the systemic support for this process, and a general approach that may be taken by a school commencing the EATSIPS process.

This process:

- provides a basis for understanding what EATSIPS is and how it can support your school
- clarifies both whole-school and classroom expectations

- increases the likelihood of the document being used as a tool for planning rather than a meaningless document to be shelved
- encourages communication with school staff and the Indigenous community and students
- supports evidence-based discussions to help teaching staff understand and communicate confidently why the implementation of EATSIPS in all schools is important.

The image displays two pages from the 'Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools' document. The left page is titled 'Indigenous Education and Training Futures' and contains a table with columns for 'EATSIPS', 'What are we doing?', and 'What do we want?'. The right page is titled 'EATSIPS Process and Principles' and contains a table with columns for 'EATSIPS Process and Principles', 'What are we doing?', and 'What do we want?'. Both pages include detailed text and bullet points related to the implementation of EATSIPS.

Step 1: Unpack the document/framework



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Strategies for Learning Success  
Schools "Learn" - We celebrate identity as  
Indigenous

clever • skilled • creative

Four Action Areas	Response	Level One	Evidence (Notes)
<b>Organisational Environment</b>	<p><b>Context</b> Increase a Lateral context with Indigenous people and perspectives</p> <p><b>Cultures</b> Model acceptance and respect for diversity and difference</p>	<p><b>Key Improvement Strategic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in many roles</li> <li>Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities in school planning and pedagogical practices, curriculum delivery, evaluation and reporting</li> <li>Develop good communication between schools and communities</li> <li>Acknowledgment of Country at every key event</li> <li>Provide relevant and appropriate teaching and curriculum materials that are easily accessible</li> <li>Include community events and annual events (local, regional and national) into school calendars and newsletters</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<p><b>Classrooms</b> Update teacher knowledge and skills in relation to embedding Indigenous perspectives in the classroom</p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the key learning areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep up to date with events held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and attending these in roles or newsletters</li> <li>Develop and disseminate a list of local community organisations</li> <li>Support the development of units of work and school programs around local community needs</li> <li>Invite local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to open special events</li> <li>Develop a project in consultation with the local community, which enable schools to give back to the community. <b>Local Histories</b> projects</li> </ul> <p><small>*NOTE: THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO ABORIGINAL &amp; TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE LIVING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE SCHOOLS, AREA LOOK BEYOND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, IF NECESSARY TO DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL &amp; TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE WIDER TOWN.</small></p>	
<b>Curriculum and Pedagogy</b>	<p><b>Communities</b> Develop local area learning experiences that engage students at the point of local communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge frameworks with curriculum and pedagogical practices <b>Local Histories</b> Planning and Teaching Frameworks</li> <li>Phase content and processes used within the classroom around the Cycle of Learning</li> <li>A balance between the content and processes within the curriculum and pedagogical practices within the classroom</li> </ul>	
<b>Personal and Professional Accountability</b>	<p><b>Celebrations</b> Participate in events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every staff member participate in cross cultural awareness learning (It's Everyone's Business and Hidden Histories)</li> <li>Understands and works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</li> </ul>	

Step 2: Make the gaps visible and provide strategies to move forward according to percentage of Indigenous students enrolment at the time.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE ARTS

Indigenous Education

Education Queensland Targets for Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in the Organisational Environment

School Audit

Criteria (Organisational Environment)	Phase 1 Uninformed	Phase 2 Aware	Phase 3 Engaged	Phase 4 Actioning
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are integrated across professional development.	There is some consideration of professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees but no process in place to support their professional development.	There is some consideration of professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees but no process in place to support their professional development.	The school proactively supports the school to develop a range of opportunities to support their professional development.	The school is actively supporting the school to develop a range of opportunities to support their professional development.
The school has a school based Indigenous working party.	The school has a school based Indigenous working party.	The school has a school based Indigenous working party.	The school has a school based Indigenous working party with some links to the local community that participate and bring pedagogical practices, curriculum delivery and reporting.	The school is actively supporting the school to develop a range of opportunities to support their professional development.
Current professional development around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and perspectives.	Some key content of staff professional development around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and perspectives.	Some key content of staff professional development around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and perspectives.	Staff professional development includes content around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and perspectives.	All staff professional development includes content around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and perspectives.
School teachers are in a range of roles that are likely to be sensitive and an outcome of the strategies in that school.	School teachers are in a range of roles that are likely to be sensitive and an outcome of the strategies in that school.	School teachers are in a range of roles that are likely to be sensitive and an outcome of the strategies in that school.	School teachers are in a range of roles that are likely to be sensitive and an outcome of the strategies in that school.	School teachers are in a range of roles that are likely to be sensitive and an outcome of the strategies in that school.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are not currently represented across the school through engagement in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.
The school is currently consent of the school to have processes that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.	The school has some representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the GATSS process.

\*\*NB This document is not a checklist, it is read an ongoing process

School Audit

Indigenous Education

Education Queensland Targets for Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in the Organisational Environment

Personal and Professional Accountability

Criteria (Personal and Professional Accountability)	Phase 1 Uninformed	Phase 2 Aware	Phase 3 Engaged	Phase 4 Actioning
Every staff member participate in cross cultural awareness learning (It's Everyone's Business and Hidden Histories)	Some staff members participate in cross cultural awareness learning (It's Everyone's Business and Hidden Histories)	Some staff members participate in cross cultural awareness learning (It's Everyone's Business and Hidden Histories)	Every staff member participate in cross cultural awareness learning (It's Everyone's Business and Hidden Histories)	Every staff member participate in cross cultural awareness learning (It's Everyone's Business and Hidden Histories)
Understands and works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Some staff members understand and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Some staff members understand and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Every staff member understands and works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Every staff member understands and works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

\*\*NB This document is not a checklist, it is read an ongoing process

Step 3: Map where the school sits on the continuum of embeddedness

Schools can determine where they currently sit on this continuum and discuss, plan and implement strategies that will assist them to continue to move toward the 'embedding' end — moving from uninformed to acting and implementing.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE ARTS

**Indigenous Education** Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives Implementation Plan

**Strategic Intent**

	Goals	Targets	One
Organisational Environment			
Community Partnerships			
Curriculum and Pedagogy			
Personal and Professional Accountability			

Queensland the Smart State

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND THE ARTS

**Indigenous Education** Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives Implementation Plan

**Implementation**

Key Improvement Strategies and Objectives	What (actions) The actions and outcomes required to progress the key improvement strategies	How (Performance) The budget, resources, IT, training and learning center

Queensland the Smart State

Step 4: Create your plan (in line with your operational plan)

## Actioning EATSIPS

The EATSIPS guide provides key examples of why we need to embed Indigenous perspectives in school communities and how we go about doing it. This document captures why and how the Department of Education and Training is creating opportunities for schools to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives fully.

To move forward as learning communities, to action EATSIPS, there are case studies (see Section 6) as well as key contacts and personnel to assist in learning journeys (see Appendix 1).

The implementation process, delivering EATSIPS on the ground in schools, is aided by careful attention and development around the four action areas of EATSIPS:

- professional and personal accountabilities
- curriculum and pedagogy
- community engagement
- organisational environment.

Coupled with this is the ability of schools to interact online with recent EATSIPS developments and move through the implementation process outlined in the proposed online learning courses.

EATSIPS represents an important journey for our school communities to embark on, as EATSIPS is everyone's business — schools, teachers, students and families.



# Appendix 1

## Resources

It is the everyday environmental experiences in schools that reflect their ethos, values and commitments. This is evidenced through the resources in the school.<sup>22</sup> If schools reflect Western values, and Indigenous perspectives are omitted, then it is less likely that Indigenous people (including students) will engage in school processes. Aside from human resources, physical resources will assist teachers in developing appropriate learning experiences and active classroom contexts that value Indigenous perspectives.

Relevant and appropriate teaching materials are required for quality inclusion of Indigenous resources. Funding for these should come from various areas of the school and should not be limited to one-off Commonwealth-funded programs. Each curriculum area of the school needs to maintain processes that focus on the purchasing of resources and building skills at a subject-specific level.

This resource allocation within school budgets should be one component of annual operations in the school. The library resources should also focus on an ongoing purchase of key Indigenous media, including *National Indigenous Times*, *Koori Mail*, *Torres Strait Islander Times*, and *Deadly Vibe*. Developing a place in the school to keep 'local' artefacts and local knowledge, including local language resources and recordings, will also assist. Communities can use these areas of the school to deposit information and share cultural perspectives through the use of new technologies.<sup>23</sup> Many schools have Indigenous knowledge centres within school libraries, or separate cultural centres or keeping places.

Indigenous Schooling Support Units (ISSUs) based in Springfield, Inala and Townsville have libraries and resource centres with a wide variety of artefacts, books, videos, DVDs, posters, computer programs, puzzles, dolls, games and magazines that are available for school use. Librarians can also provide advice about the purchase of these materials.<sup>24</sup>

All students should have access to these resources. The State Library of Queensland also provides resources to Indigenous knowledge centres across Queensland.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> David Seamon 1979

<sup>23</sup> For example, Miroma, an online language database, is an excellent resource for the recording and storing of local knowledge on Indigenous languages.

<sup>24</sup> For registration and the online catalogue of Indigenous Schooling Support Unit CSQ libraries go to: [www.education.qld.gov.au/information/service/libraries/atsi](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/information/service/libraries/atsi) [accessed 13 May] new link to access Catalogue and register [www.learningplace.com.au/ea/issu-csq](http://www.learningplace.com.au/ea/issu-csq) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>25</sup> [libraries.slq.qld.gov.au/home/browse\\_by\\_ikc](http://libraries.slq.qld.gov.au/home/browse_by_ikc) [accessed 13 May] new link for ISSU library catalogue [www.202.191.49.181/liberty3/libraryHome.do](http://www.202.191.49.181/liberty3/libraryHome.do) [accessed 13 May 2010]

## 1. Knowledge frameworks

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- Holistic planning and teaching framework: [www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/educators/cultural-aware-localstory.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/educators/cultural-aware-localstory.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- Mura Gubal Gedira framework: <http://tsirec.com.au/> [accessed 8 November 2010]

### Weave of Knowledge

- Davis and Sheehan 2009 cited in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Senior Syllabus, Queensland Studies Authority 2009, p. 20. [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/8848.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/8848.html) [accessed 30 September 2010]

Martin, K (n.d) *Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing: A theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist re-search, The Australian Public Intellectual Network* (online):

[www.apinetwork.com/main/index.php?apply=scholars&webpage=default&flexedit=&flex\\_password=&menu\\_label=&menuID=54&menubox=&scholar=105#35](http://www.apinetwork.com/main/index.php?apply=scholars&webpage=default&flexedit=&flex_password=&menu_label=&menuID=54&menubox=&scholar=105#35) [accessed 7 April 2009]

## 2. Contacts

Division of Indigenous Education and Training Futures, Department of Education and Training. Telephone: (07) 3237 0070; [www.deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous) [accessed 13 May 2010].

Indigenous Schooling Support Units can be found in the following centres. Telephone the EATSIPS project officers for support.

Central Southern Queensland (ISSU CSQ)	
Springfield	(07) 3381 6400
Inala	(07) 3372 5066
Sunshine Coast	(07) 5436 8409
Rockhampton	(07) 4938 4942
North Queensland (ISSU NQ)	
Townsville: servicing North Queensland	(07) 4775 6055
Far North Queensland (ISSU FNQ)	
Cairns	(07) 4044 5600

### 3. Websites

- Indigenous Schooling Support Unit, Central Southern Queensland:  
[www.learningplace.com/ea/issu-csq](http://www.learningplace.com/ea/issu-csq)  
[accessed 13 May 2010]
- Queensland Studies Authority Indigenous perspectives:  
[www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/8848.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/8848.html)  
[accessed 13 May 2010]
- Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages:  
[www.fatsil.org.au/Languages/](http://www.fatsil.org.au/Languages/)  
[accessed 13 May 2010]
- *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2009–2012*: [www.reconciliation.qld.gov.au/](http://www.reconciliation.qld.gov.au/) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- Prime Minister's apology to the Stolen Generations speech: [www.pm.gov.au/node/5952](http://www.pm.gov.au/node/5952) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*: [www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx](http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG): [www.coag.gov.au/coag\\_meeting\\_outcomes/2008-10-02/index.cfm#gap](http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-10-02/index.cfm#gap) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- McIntosh, Peggy (1988) *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA [www.iub.edu/~tchsotl/part2/McIntosh%20White%20Privilege.pdf](http://www.iub.edu/~tchsotl/part2/McIntosh%20White%20Privilege.pdf) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- McIntosh, Peggy (1990) *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA [www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf](http://www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- [www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au](http://www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]

#### Intellectual property

- *Valuing art, respecting culture: protocols for working with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts and craft sector*: [www.visualarts.net.au/nv/articles/value.pdf](http://www.visualarts.net.au/nv/articles/value.pdf); [www.visualarts.net.au/advicecentre/protocols](http://www.visualarts.net.au/advicecentre/protocols) [accessed 13 May 2010]

- In May 2009, Screen Australia published a comprehensive guide for all filmmakers working with Indigenous content and communities, titled *Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts*:  
[www.screenaustralia.gov.au/about\\_us/pub\\_indig\\_protocols.asp](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/about_us/pub_indig_protocols.asp) [accessed 13 May 2010]

#### Protocols

- *Protocols for consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people*:  
[www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-aboriginal/](http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-aboriginal/) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- *Mina Mir Lo Ailan Mun – Proper communication with Torres Strait Islander people*:  
[www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-torres-strait-islander/](http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business/protocols-torres-strait-islander/) [accessed 13 May 2010]

#### Language resources

- A website developed by ESL staff with FNQ ISSU: [www.languageperspectives.org.au](http://www.languageperspectives.org.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- Education Queensland (2008) *Curriculum Guidelines for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners*: [www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/esl-learners.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/esl-learners.html) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- Berry, R. & Hudson, J. (1997) *Making the Jump*. A resource book for Teachers of Aboriginal Students, Catholic Education Office, Kimberley Region: Broome, Western Australia.
- Murray, Fran (1995) *Walking, Talking Texts, a program for Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language*, Northern Territory Department of Education: Darwin.
- McKay, Newton, M. & Hudson, C. (1994) *ESL Development: Language and Literacy in School, Volume 1 Teacher's Manual*, National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, Canberra.
- Education Queensland (1999–2002) *ESL Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learners*. [www.education.qld.gov.au/students/evaluation/monitoring/bandscales/](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/students/evaluation/monitoring/bandscales/) [accessed 13 May 2010]
- Education Queensland (2008) *Language for ESL Learners*: [www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/docs/esl-learners.doc](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/docs/esl-learners.doc) [accessed 13 May 2010]

# Appendix 2

## Strategies for embedding Indigenous perspectives in curriculum and pedagogy

<i>Seeking stories</i>	<p>Many teachers have been working on embedding Indigenous perspectives in their curriculum and pedagogical practices over the last 20 years. A great starting point is talking to other teachers and Indigenous education workers, and reading case studies of the various approaches taken. The <i>EATSIPS</i> website and the <i>What Works</i><sup>26</sup> program provide a good bank of teacher written case studies.</p>
<i>Focus on content and process</i>	<p>Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives should focus on both the <i>content</i> and the <i>process</i> used within the classroom. For this reason, teaching staff may begin the process while teaching curriculum content areas they are most familiar with. Each of the action areas, as they pertain to the classroom and curriculum context, will need to be continually revisited during teaching as teachers change schools and professional roles, and as student cohorts change, Indigenous engagement increases and teacher skills and confidence increases.</p>
<i>Educate yourself</i>	<p>Fundamental to introducing Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum is the recognition that there are two distinct Indigenous Australian cultures: those of Aboriginal peoples and those of Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, more than 260 Indigenous nations with more than 600 languages and dialects exist across Australia. Understanding this rich and diverse cultural heritage, multicultural perspectives and the impact of colonisation on Indigenous peoples will assist in EATSIPS and the curriculum. Talking to a wide variety of peoples, reading books and watching videos are all a great start. Commit to one new resource a week, and the task of new learning becomes manageable.</p>
<i>Value oral traditions</i>	<p>Oral traditions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities exist in a number of interwoven forms. Oral traditions are the principal historical and day-to-day records of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and should be regarded as a significant part of Australian society. These oral traditions are seen as significant historical records informing written history, the arts and current cultural practices.</p> <p>Oral traditions include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narratives, facts and spiritual beliefs that relate to the Ancestral Beings, creation times and the lore</li> <li>• family and clan relationships and responsibilities to the land, seas, waterways, the sky and the universe</li> <li>• rights and responsibilities around art forms including song, dance, music and visual arts in describing world views and relationships</li> <li>• scientific knowledge, including classification of environmental elements, seasonal patterns and conditions</li> <li>• stories of early contact with colonists</li> <li>• personal and community histories of lived experiences and events</li> <li>• biographical stories of individuals</li> <li>• kinship structures and community obligations.</li> </ul> <p>Oral traditions substantiate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives about the past, present and future. They have been supported through various media such as rock and sand art, body painting, song and dance: and on artefacts including canoes, masks, message sticks and carvings. They are increasingly being expressed through the visual and performing arts, songs, multimedia such as computers, CDs, radio, film and TV, and literary expositions including prose, poetry, plays and other means of scriptwriting.</p>

<sup>26</sup> The What Works workbook and website is designed to help teachers understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and provides a great place to start: [www.whatworks.edu.au/3\\_3.htm](http://www.whatworks.edu.au/3_3.htm) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<i>Negotiate terminology</i>	Consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is essential when deciding on appropriate terminology to use within the school curriculum. It is equally important to consider the ways in which Indigenous peoples are represented through language in the classroom. Adjusting terminology used by the teacher and students within the classroom is critical, as it gives students a model for appropriate language and terminology to use when describing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and events. The original <i>Draft P–12 Guidelines and framework for the teaching of Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies in Queensland schools</i> is a framework for critically analysing texts and a terminology list to guide teachers in the appropriate use and avoidance of terms. <sup>27</sup> In addition, the Queensland Studies Authority has compiled an extensive terminology list through consultation with Indigenous education workers from across Queensland.
<i>Challenge negative attitudes within the classroom</i>	It is important to use pedagogical strategies to assist students both to reveal and change any negative attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes they may hold. Learning circles, small group responses, role-play and individual reflections are effective ways to share beliefs within a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. This process should be undertaken initially in the context of a curriculum content area with which the classroom teacher is confident, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are invited to assist. Be mindful of the place of Indigenous students within the class in this context.
<i>Showcase success</i>	It is important to consider strategies for sharing the success of students with community and parents. This enables Indigenous peoples to check for appropriateness of knowledge and understanding, and enables dialogue to occur within the broader community around Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships and reconciliation processes.
<i>Journal</i>	Keeping a personal journal of the learning process enables individuals to reflect on where they have come from and where they are now. Honest personal reflection assists in purging personal emotions that are hard to articulate to others. Teachers involved in this process have articulated that personal journals enabled them to stay focused, to reflect honestly and to be open to change. Journals can also help to create the habits of mind in self-reflection needed for changing attitudes and perceptions created through a dominant paradigm. <sup>28</sup>
<i>Focus groups</i>	Joining or creating a focus group for professional and personal accountability assists school staff in sharing journeys at a personal level. This helps build relationships and extend individual learning through sharing of experiences and responses. Reconciliation groups can also assist.

<sup>27</sup> These draft documents (1995) can be found in LEC libraries.

<sup>28</sup> Dreise M 2004.



<i>Challenge</i>	Challenge stereotypes and beliefs about Indigenous peoples. <sup>29</sup> These may arise in conversations, staff rooms, in the media or in meetings. Seek to understand perspectives through learning to recognise racism, ignorance and unfounded attitudes. Challenge racist jokes and be willing to take responsibility for personal actions of the past.
<i>Attend</i>	Commit to attending EATSIPS workshops and courses. The Department of Education and Training's Crossing Cultures training is a good start.
<i>Recognise</i>	Recognise that Aboriginal peoples are distinctly different from Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that within these two groups there exists a complex mix of many language groups. Each group has its own individual belief system, language and dialect, lore and relationship to the land, seas and waterways.
<i>Acknowledge</i>	Acknowledge the impact government policies and dominant cultural perspectives have in shaping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and identities. Be aware that Indigenous peoples are different yet collectively linked through history and mistreatment.
<i>Investigate</i>	Investigate and seek to understand the impact of colonisation on Indigenous peoples.
<i>Read and discuss</i>	Study current theories on the intersection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural interface</li> <li>• Indigenous standpoint theory.</li> </ul>
<i>Long-term accountability</i>	As a part of country service, many teachers and school leaders work within Indigenous communities and schools. The commitment to stay within the community is often limited by the departmental requirements for country service. When school leadership and teaching staff change continually, sustainable structures are harder to develop. A commitment to leaving a legacy of sustainable practice is part of the professional accountability process. Alternatively, departmental staff are asked to consider the needs of the community in relocating to a new job. Commitments of more than three years have shown a direct link to Indigenous student success and community engagement in the school.
<i>Know your students</i>	Seek to understand the perspectives of non-Indigenous students within the school and the historical relationships of these students and their families with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Colonisation involves colonisers and those colonised, and the repercussions of this need to be considered. Within a classroom context, it is particularly important to research the local history from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, to ensure that a sensitive and balanced representation of a local history is given.

<sup>29</sup> A good place to start to challenge some generally held beliefs about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: <http://www.acra.org.au/culture/rebutting-the-myths.html> [accessed 13 May 2010]

<i>Accountability process</i>	Establish an accountability process for teachers and other school staff whereby individual staff members develop professional plans with the principal for teaching, professional development, leadership opportunities, and service to the school and community. This could be developed as part of the school's annual review cycle, and would assist the principal in monitoring attitudes and perceptions in the school, individual staff aspirations and school community partnerships being developed.
<i>Open-door policy</i>	Maintaining an open-door policy, where parents and community members can 'drop in' and be a part of the class and schooling environment, will enhance relationships with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. An open-door policy promotes unity within the whole school community.
<i>Timetable flexibility</i>	Timetable constraints can often impede the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the school environment. Flexibility is needed to enable timetables to align with local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community events or cultural speakers' availability. This approach helps staff to work more closely with Indigenous communities, and respects different perspectives and priorities.
<i>Program flexibility</i>	Program flexibility offers school staff the freedom to adjust and redevelop work programs, and support materials to ensure Indigenous perspectives are embedded within school practices. From an administrative perspective, it is helpful to start by auditing the intended curriculum to identify where Indigenous content and perspectives are currently included, what gaps exist and what opportunities exist within current work programs. The curriculum should be flexible and responsive to both school demands and community needs.
<i>Capacity building</i>	Indigenous parents have often had little opportunity to participate in schools. Consider ways in which school staff can build the capacity for the engagement of parents and other community members. Building relationships from less formal events, such as BBQs and get-togethers, will assist, as these events can progress to the introduction of more formal gatherings such as teachers sharing curriculum ideas, or parents learning literacy skills or computer applications.
<i>Engaged communities</i>	Opportunities currently exist in the senior school through the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) for Indigenous organisations to develop structured community and workplace learning programs which will, if recognised by Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), contribute towards credit for the QCE. By mapping current opportunities with community organisations and developing programs to the QSA requirements, there will be benefit for the school, students and the community. <sup>30</sup>
<i>Engaged students</i>	Schools could monitor the level of satisfaction of Indigenous students in the school through the establishment of an Indigenous student committee, or through processes for seeking feedback from students. Considering processes such as independent learning programs may assist students in the senior school to attain the requirements of a QCE while following individually identified pathways and interests. <sup>31</sup>
<i>Career guidance</i>	Many programs and pathways exist for Indigenous students that target their engagement in further education and training and the workforce. Guidance officers need to be made aware of the various programs and ensure that these are matched to student aspirations. The Senior Education and Training (SET) plan process in the school should be reviewed to involve the student, school staff, Indigenous education workers in the school, parents and Indigenous community organisations. This will assist in creating a greater picture of the opportunities for Indigenous students, particularly from Years 8–12.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/> [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/589.html> [accessed 13 May 2010]

# Appendix 3

## Strategies for embedding Indigenous perspectives in the school's organisational environment

### Staffing

The employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is central to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the organisational environment of the school. The Department of Education and Training has an established employment strategy that will assist in meeting targets for Indigenous employment.

*Engage and include* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and people in school planning and pedagogical processes, curriculum delivery, evaluation and reporting processes in the school. Inclusion can be encouraged through a variety of formal and informal settings and experiences, such as open days, planned meetings, discussion groups, online chat, email, phone contact and one-on-one meetings.

*Provision of professional development* for all teaching staff will develop greater understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and perspectives.<sup>32</sup>

*Active recruitment* – develop systems for advertising roles and recruiting Indigenous peoples through universities, TAFEs and other institutions. This will assist in increasing the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in many roles within the school, including as teacher aides, community education counsellors, cultural consultants, guest speakers, artists in residence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education coordinators, teachers, community members and volunteers.

### Strategies

Strategies that will facilitate and support the employment of Indigenous staff include:

- actively identifying positions for, and recruiting, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff by working with:
  - Indigenous community organisations to promote and disseminate advertised positions
  - ISSUs and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander units within the department to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander communities are informed of vacancies existing in schools

- regional human resource personnel to recruit suitable applicants. This might include contacting Indigenous workers in the region through the regional office
- *Wal Meta*, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public sector employment development unit working with government agencies to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people achieve equity with non-Indigenous Australians in terms of employment and economic status<sup>33</sup>
- supporting the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and identifying and offering sustainable career pathways. In schools where Indigenous staff members have been employed for many years through Commonwealth-funded programs and on a casual basis, schools working on EATSIPS could plan strategically to change this status to state-funded permanent positions
- establishing community training programs to train individuals within the school priority areas (for example, development and delivery of cross-cultural training), which will ensure the school can access suitably trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to support teaching and learning programs.

### Physical environment

*Regardless of the historical time or the geographical, technological, and social situation, people will always need place because having a place and identifying with place are integral to what and who we are as human beings* (David Seamon, 2003).

Creating a sense of place for Indigenous peoples in a school, where a Western cultural perspective has been dominant and the school infrastructure reflects this, is quite difficult. It is argued that the more strongly an environment generates a sense of belonging, the more strongly does that environment become a place.<sup>34</sup> Relph 1976 argues that if a person feels inside a place, 'in-sidedness', he or she is here rather than there, safe rather than threatened, enclosed rather than exposed, at ease rather than stressed.

The more profoundly an Indigenous student or community member feels inside a place, the stronger his or her identity will be with that place.

<sup>32</sup> Contact your ISSU for details on cultural awareness training: [www.issu.com.au](http://www.issu.com.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>33</sup> For more information on *Wal Meta* see: [www.wal-meta.qld.gov.au](http://www.wal-meta.qld.gov.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>34</sup> Relph, E. (1976) *Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion.

Conversely, Indigenous peoples can be separate or alienated from place, and this mode of place experience is 'out-sidedness'.<sup>35</sup> This out-sidedness, is where the person feels separate from or out of place. Place may feel alienating, unreal, unpleasant, or oppressive.

In schools, Indigenous students and community may not engage, or may disengage or rebel, where feelings of place alienation are experienced.

School leaders can change this through EATSIPS. A focus on the school's physical environment will assist this process and create a visible value for Indigenous peoples within the school.

## Strategies

Some physical environmental strategies that might assist in creating a sense of place in schools for Indigenous peoples include:

- *Review:* Take a walk around the school to look at the physical environment of the school, including gardens, buildings and classrooms. Does it contain evidence of the value of Indigenous peoples in the school? This scan will enable you to consider the possibilities and gaps in your school's current physical environment.
- *Community-school resource sharing:* The Department of Education and Training provides key resources and facilities to which many community people have limited access. The whole school community can negotiate to share libraries, computer facilities, rooms and sports grounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations also have resources (human and physical) that can benefit schools, particularly with the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
- *Acknowledgment:* A physical acknowledgment of Indigenous peoples is to raise the three nationally recognised flags each day in the school, and not just on special occasions. The Aboriginal, the Torres Strait Islander and Australian flag hung together outside a school demonstrates a commitment to a united Australia that values its first peoples.
- *Facilities:* Facilities can be developed throughout the school to assist in making the school a

welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members. These might include outdoor classrooms, learnscapes<sup>36</sup>, reconciliation spaces and trails. Outdoor classrooms also enable bush foods and native gardens to be integrated into the school environment and critical components of sustainable practices within school curriculum.

- *Start early:* The early years of schooling are a wonderful place to consider physical resources for EATSIPS. A rich amount of texts, musical instruments, toys, puzzles, multimedia software, dolls and posters exist suitable for the early years, and developed by Indigenous peoples. In the middle and senior schools, teachers also have access to similar resources suitable for the age ranges of their students. Considering how resources can be visible in middle and upper school classrooms will be important for the engagement of Indigenous students within these class contexts. The English as a second language nature of most Indigenous students also encourages text and picture-rich classrooms at all levels of schooling.
- *Value Indigenous peoples:* Allocation of rooms<sup>37</sup> for Indigenous education workers and community members, which include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander murals and public artworks, might also be considered. These 'spaces' can provide 'talking points' for staff, students and community and encourage the valuing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions.
- *Student identity:* In many schools Indigenous students are engaged in specific programs such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program (ATSITAP or AITAP), Indigenous sporting teams, dance groups and other competitive teams. Regardless of these, acknowledging Indigenous students as a cohort within the school helps to bring students close together. Some schools display group photos of students in foyers, create specific football or sports blazers, allow the wearing of cultural jewellery, create Indigenous leadership badges or incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flags into school/sports uniforms. Depending on the school and the student cohort, students may wish to be recognised in these ways.

<sup>35</sup> Relph, E. (1976) *Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion.

<sup>36</sup> Learnscapes are places where a learning program has been designed to permit users to interact with an environment. They may be natural or built, interior or exterior and may be located in schools, near schools or beyond schools. They may relate to any one or many key learning areas and be safe and accessible. For more information see: [www.learnscapes.org](http://www.learnscapes.org) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>37</sup> Many schools within Queensland host an Indigenous hub, unit or centre (or a community centre) within the school environment. This centre becomes a special place for many people within the school and offers a safe location for students and community to gather and plan events or discuss ideas or issues.

- *Traditional custodianship:* Valuing traditional custodianship is more than providing a welcome to Country or acknowledgment of Country. It considers the place of local peoples and traditional knowledges and beliefs within the whole school environment. Working with Indigenous people to create welcome to Country signage, and labelling of buildings and aspects of the school in local languages, has been used as a strategy in many schools across Queensland. So too, school sporting teams, school committees and major facilities like new halls, pathways and gardens have negotiated the use of traditional language names. This labelling of facilities opens discussion around the local traditional knowledges and peoples, and encourages further dialogue in the school.
- *Visible representations:* Encouraging teachers and school staff to display Indigenous posters, community advertisements, language maps and focused student work creates opportunities for institutional spaces to become more friendly and representative of a wide range of texts and cultures.
- *Public art:* The Queensland Government provides financial support for the inclusion of public art within new facilities and buildings. Involving Indigenous peoples in this process will assist in creating new spaces that reflect Indigenous art and arts practices.<sup>38</sup>
- *Advertising annual events:* Including annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events (local, regional and national) on the school's calendar ensures that students and staff learn about local and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, as a component of the curriculum.
- *Support teachers:* Provide professional development for teachers in engagement with community, local community protocols and key community members and organisations. Develop an induction program to run twice yearly to support the introduction of new teachers and staff to Indigenous communities. Provide time and non-contact time for teachers to work with Indigenous communities in the development of units of work and policy, work programs and events.
- *Shared responsibility:* Create agreements for shared use of school resources around community needs and aspirations. This can include the running of targeted training for parents and community on school processes, guest speaker abilities, the arts and information technology. School leaders should also be aware of the partnerships and engagement processes being negotiated by school staff, and should ensure that both the community and school gain benefits from the agreement. For example, a local Indigenous business may develop a partnership with the school to discuss the business and provide work experience for students. Together, the teacher and business owner develop a design brief for a new logo and set of stationery materials for the business. The business owner presents the brief to students. The students, as a part of their assessment task, design and fabricate the stationery materials incorporating the new logo. The business owner comes to class and listens to students pitch their logo and materials. The business owner works with the teacher to assess the student work. She/he then chooses one that becomes the real product for the business. The school prints up the initial copies and provides digital formats to the business, the partnership and engagement process is written up for other staff and community to consider, the business gets a new logo and stationery, the students and teachers are engaged in a real-life process, and each person in the process benefits.<sup>39</sup>

The following strategies may assist in the development and maintenance of strong community partnerships and engagement.

- *Keeping up-to-date with community events:* Assigning staff to develop and maintain processes for keeping up-to-date with events hosted by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, regional ISSUs and statewide organisations. Develop systems to advertise these in notices, staff meetings, newsletters and parades.

<sup>38</sup> See [www.arts.qld.gov.au](http://www.arts.qld.gov.au) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>39</sup> This example is taken from Dreise M 2004

Other projects that have been tried by schools in supporting the engagement of Indigenous peoples, which enable schools to 'give back' to the community, include:

- working on oral history projects
  - students contributing to local community newspapers
  - students developing resources for local Indigenous organisations such as Indigenous kindergartens
  - collecting and collating information on the local area from archival materials and giving copies to local historical centres/museums
  - recording and storing of local language knowledge in partnership with Indigenous language and knowledge centres
  - developing and hosting community projects and events.
- *Monitor curriculum:* School leaders should ensure that local communities are involved in the explicit teaching of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, respect for Country and cultural perspectives. Although there is much a teacher can teach in the school around Indigenous perspectives, some specific cultural teachings can only come from Indigenous peoples.
  - *Mutual agreements:* Some schools have worked hard in establishing community–school protocols for sharing both cultural and school information. Mutual agreements or memorandums of understanding signed publicly can support the ongoing systemic embedding of protocols and partnerships based on trust and cultural competent behaviour. These agreements can make explicit to school staff and community the behaviours and appropriate processes to sustain Indigenous engagement within the school.
  - *Seek advice and leadership:* Establish an Indigenous Education Committee with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives of the local community and across government agencies to embed Indigenous perspectives within the school.
  - *Provide spaces for Indigenous place to be experienced:* Create areas within the school that promote community partnerships and engagement, for example, allocated rooms, bush tucker gardens, memorial sites, recognition spaces and local heroes walls.
  - *Reconciliation:* Establishing learning circles<sup>40</sup> within the school community to bring together community members and staff to discuss local histories, personal narratives, attitudes and perceptions. In addition to this, celebrate Reconciliation Week annually and host events for the whole school community in support of the reconciliation process.
  - *Respect:* Ensure that local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community members (specifically Traditional Owners) are invited to school events and have the option to participate and open special events.
  - *Showcase:* Present Indigenous perspectives at a parent, carers and community information night.
  - *Career pathways and student success:* Work with local industry, businesses, TAFE and universities to negotiate and support pathways for Indigenous students. Make agreements and commitments and share these across the school. Track students for three to four years post schooling to capture the success of school partnerships and engagement, and to consider re-engagement of past students into the school. Share student success post-schooling.
  - *Indigenous education — it's everybody's business:* Ensure that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representatives are on selection panels for new school staff including, where possible, new teachers and leadership. In position descriptions, ensure that a minimum of one criteria is focused on EATSIPS. During the interview, incorporate a question related to community partnerships and engagement with Indigenous peoples. In addition, build this into ongoing staff performance reviews.
  - *Share practices:* Develop processes for interschool sharing of good practices for embedding Indigenous perspectives within the school environment.<sup>41</sup> Cluster EATSIPS focus groups may assist in this.

<sup>40</sup> A learning circle is a small group of people who meet regularly to discuss and learn about issues that concern them, their community or the wider community. For more details see: The Reconciliation Australia Local reconciliation groups toolkit in 'Reconciliation resource's' on the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Archive website: [www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/car/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/car/) [accessed 13 May 2010]

<sup>41</sup> Centres of Excellence are identified schools that have marked improvements in one of the four key priority areas within the Partners for Success Action Plan 2003–2005. For more details: [www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous) [accessed 13 May 2010]

- *Expand relationships:* If the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is small, it may be necessary to develop relationships with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations from a nearby town or location.

Helpful contacts include:

- Indigenous education workers and community education counsellors in schools, districts or regions
- Regional Community Education Counsellors and Community Partnership officers in regional and district offices
- ISSUs
- local and regional lands councils
- Division of Indigenous Education and Training in central office
- Indigenous knowledge centres
- locally run Indigenous art galleries and groups
- Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee
- Indigenous language centres
- Indigenous health centres
- Indigenous Coordination Centres<sup>42</sup>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.<sup>43</sup>

- *Understanding protocols:* It is essential to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols in establishing and developing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members.

Basic protocols include:

- making introductions
- establishing open communication
- listening in community meetings and knowing when to speak
- negotiating access to sacred sites
- teaching cultural practices
- Indigenous people retaining cultural and intellectual rights
- building mutually positive relationships.

Schools need to consult their Indigenous education workers, or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the department, about how to engage with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the local community. Partnerships and engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are guided by community protocols and developed through mutual trust and respect.

It is important to understand that protocols will differ from one community to another. Although some similar protocols may exist among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, specific protocols related to the local area may also exist. Some useful resources for exploring Indigenous protocols prior to working within the local community are available on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services website: [www.atsip.qld.gov.au/government/oatsip](http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/government/oatsip)

<sup>42</sup> Indigenous Coordination Centres can be contacted through [www.oipc.gov.au/tools/contact.asp#3](http://www.oipc.gov.au/tools/contact.asp#3) for assistance to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise with some local knowledge.

<sup>43</sup> For information about this organisation see <http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au> [accessed 13 May 2010]

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## Acronyms

ISSU – Indigenous Schooling Support Unit

NAIDOC – National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (Day of Celebration)

SAE – Standard Australian English





