

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RECONCILIATION

Scope: This policy applies to all staff employed in Catholic schools, colleges, kindergartens and outside school hours care centres conducted by Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton (referred to as Catholic Education in the document).

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Catholic Education promotes attitudes, behaviours, perspectives and knowledge that facilitates reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2. DESCRIPTION

Reconciliation starts with an acknowledgement that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have a deep spiritual connection to land, seas and waterways are the traditional custodians of this country. Reconciliation acknowledges past injustices and embraces a future based on mutual respect and responsibility. Reconciliation in practice reflects Catholic Education's mission of honouring the past, enriching the present, shaping the future and finding meaning for life.

Spirituality is a universal aspect of human nature. Spirituality of the Aboriginal peoples and of the Torres Strait Islander peoples is unique and has developed over many thousands of years. God has always been here in the land, the lore, the kinship and the spirituality of the Indigenous peoples.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

1. Schools will develop and implement Reconciliation Action Plans using *Reconciliation Australia* resources to develop a vision, actions and measurable targets for:
 - a) respectful relationships
 - b) respect for people, culture, land and history
 - c) opportunities for life-long education and employment.
2. Staff will participate in cultural awareness programs e.g. *Crossing Cultures, Kanyini*.
3. Schools will build a culturally safe environment by:
 - a) acknowledging traditional custodians and where appropriate Welcome to Country
 - b) celebrating significant dates in the Indigenous calendar
 - c) flying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
 - d) considering cultural sensitivities for enrolment practices
 - e) recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture by displaying appropriate symbols in the school.
 - f) incorporating *the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority* for all students.



4. All in Catholic Education are expected to respect and acknowledge the cultural and spiritual beliefs, values and traditions of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and incorporate the spirit of reconciliation in the curriculum and school activities.
5. Catholic Education will foster ongoing relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their elders.
6. Catholic Education provides equal employment opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

4. REFLECTION MATERIAL

WEBSITES

- *Reconciliation Australia: Building relationships for change between Indigenous and Non- Indigenous Australians.* <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/>
- *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning.* <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/schools/>
- *Harmony In Between:* <https://sites.google.com/a/rok.catholic.edu.au/harmony-in-between/>

RESOURCES

- Natsicc.org.au. (2017). Pope Francis message to Indigenous Australians. [online] Available at: <http://www.natsicc.org.au/pope-francis-message-to-indigenous-australians.html>
- *The Heart of Our Country*, Reflections on Pope John Paul II's 1986 Address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Social Justice Sunday Statement 2006, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
- Reconciliation.org.au. (2017). Reconciliation Australia | The State of Reconciliation in Australia report. Available at: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/the-state-of-reconciliation-in-australia-report>
- Australiancurriculum.edu.au. (2017). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures – The Australian Curriculum v8.3*
- Pope Paul VI (1967) "*Populorum Progressio*" Encyclical of on the Development of Peoples Liberia Editrice Vaticana
- John Paul II (1986) *Address of John Paul II to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Blatherskite Park* Liberia Editrice Vaticana
- Tacey, D. (2010) *Towards a Creation Spirituality in Australia* Earth Song Journal May Issue 12