

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015: Summary

Prepared by Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement

The Education Council endorsed the new *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy* in September 2015.

The Strategy maintains a strong national focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, while enabling jurisdictions and communities to determine and implement localised approaches.

The Strategy identifies key principles which should underpin the approaches developed by all education systems and providers.

Reporting under the Strategy will focus on the national collaborative actions in order to avoid duplication of other national, systemic and local reporting arrangements.

The Strategy will be reviewed in 2018.

Vision

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people achieve their full potential, are empowered to shape their own futures, and are supported to embrace their culture and identity as Australia's First Nations peoples.

Key Principles

Achieve Potential: High expectations are held for, and by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

Equity: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are able to access the same educational opportunities and achieve the same education outcomes as other Australians

Accountability: Education systems and educators are accountable, transparent and responsive

Cultural Recognition: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories, values, languages and cultures are acknowledged and respected

Relationships: Meaningful relationships value community cultural knowledge, wisdom and expertise, and demonstrate trust and respect

Partnerships: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged in decision making, planning, delivery and evaluation of early childhood, schooling and higher education services at local, sector and national levels

Local Approaches: Educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are accelerated through local approaches for unique and diverse communities

Quality: Policies, practices, programs and partnerships are inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families, and are informed by knowledge, evidence and research.

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Priority Areas

Leadership, Quality and Workforce Development: Action is taken to ensure children and young people are taught by skilled educators who are culturally competent in the local context. Providers, including principals, set high expectations for learning that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Further support for the engagement of children, young people and their families is provided by building a well-qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workforce.

Culture and Identity: Through the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, education sectors acknowledge, respect and reflect the histories, values, languages and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All Australian children and young people have the opportunity to learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Partnerships: Quality partnerships are encouraged between education sectors and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other stakeholders. These partnerships are characterised by listening and responding, strong accountability and active engagement, collaborative information sharing and informed decision making.

Attendance: Engaging with learning is fundamental in helping all children acquire the skills they need for life. Schools and services work with families and communities on strategies to address barriers to school attendance.

Transition Points Including Pathways to Post-School Options: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are supported at critical stages of their education to improve engagement, retention and attainment and develop the skills to participate fully in schooling, society and work.

School and Child Readiness: High quality, culturally inclusive early childhood education services and schools work with families and communities to set a strong foundation for early learning, including a child's transition to school.

Literacy and Numeracy: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's English literacy and numeracy proficiencies are developed by applying proven, culturally inclusive, responsive and personalised approaches to learning, such as English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) in order to improve their educational attainment, life choices and options.



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Priorities for National Collaboration

Attendance and Engagement: Engaging with learning is critical to students achieving their individual potential. A better understanding of the complex factors influencing attendance – including identifying strategies to better engage students – will assist in supporting student attendance and engagement. The Education Council will work collaboratively through senior officials to further the work on school attendance already agreed through COAG.

In particular:

- analyse new attendance data available in late 2015 disaggregated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous status
- provide advice by the end of 2016, building on previous initiatives including work on transience and mobility.

To build on existing efforts, senior officials will analyse available reports to consider the impact of jurisdictional attendance strategies and provide advice to Council on factors affecting success. This analysis will consider best practice identified by geo-location. The initial report will be delivered mid-2016.

To further inform and refine policy responses, senior officials will provide a report by March 2016 to the Education Council on an analysis of existing jurisdictional/sector data collections to determine commonality and differences in recording and reporting authorised absence. This report will include recommendations for future analysis of the reasons for authorised absences/non-attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Transition Points Including Pathways To Post-School Options: By the end of 2016 senior officials will provide the Education Council with advice on:

- supporting the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' pathways to tertiary education through high-quality vocational learning and vocational education and training (VET), including preparing students for work, work experience and structured work placements
- the promotion and encouragement of high quality career education and advice to equip Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the skills and knowledge to make effective decisions about subject choice and post-school destinations.

Early Childhood Transitions: Through the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, education sectors acknowledge, respect and reflect the histories, values, languages and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All Australian children and young people have the opportunity to learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Workforce: Quality partnerships are encouraged between education sectors and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other stakeholders. These partnerships are characterised by listening and responding, strong accountability and active engagement, collaborative information sharing and informed decision making.

Australian Curriculum: Engaging with learning is fundamental in helping all children acquire the skills they need for life. Schools and services work with families and communities on strategies to address barriers to school attendance.