



Education and Training

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters

## Strategic Plan 2010–2013

Priorities and actions for  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education  
in ACT Public Schools



## Our vision

That all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

## Our values

- HONESTY
- EXCELLENCE
- FAIRNESS
- RESPECT

# Introduction

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters: Strategic Plan 2010–2013 (the Plan) provides clear direction for closing the learning achievement gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students. The Plan is clearly aligned with the Department's strategic plan Everyone Matters 2010–2013, ensuring that the targets set have coherence throughout the organisation.

The priorities, performance measures and key actions outlined in the Plan provide a framework for committed action and innovative responses to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and communities.

High quality curriculum, literacy and numeracy, engagement and connection, retention, pathways, relationships and leadership are high priorities of the Plan. The Plan targets cultural competency as an area of capacity building for all staff to ensure that as an organisation we better understand and respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT.

Our progress in achieving the priorities will be reported annually through both the ACT Government Annual Report and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014.

Milestone reports from Department branches and schools will provide ongoing monitoring and enable achievements, effective models and approaches to be shared and celebrated.



## Learning and teaching

To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students succeed through quality teaching that engages them and helps them develop capabilities for life.

# Priorities

- **Improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**
- **Deliver high quality curriculum which incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives**

## Performance measures

- Increased use of data to monitor individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance to drive improvement at school and system level
- Increased proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place
- Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation in NAPLAN
- Increased rate of improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in literacy and numeracy results in Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) from February to November
- Increased proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing
- All teaching and learning documentation incorporates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content as prescribed in the Australian Curriculum



## School environment

To meet each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student's academic, social, emotional and physical needs by ensuring all ACT public schools provide positive and success-oriented learning environments.

# Priorities

- **Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student engagement with, and connectedness to, school**
- **Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' involvement in schooling and decision making**

## Performance measures

- Increased attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at all year levels P-12
- Decreased rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' suspensions
- Evidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories in all schools and department offices
- Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in policy development, program implementation and service delivery at system and school level
- Increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers in programs that support early childhood development and readiness for school



# Student pathways and transitions

To provide learning pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students resulting in an educated and skilled workforce that meets the present and future needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of the ACT and region.

# Priorities

- **Increase pathway opportunities and year 12 completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**

## Performance measures

- Increased retention and attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at key transition points in schooling
- Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attaining the ACT Year 12 Certificate and Tertiary Entrance Statement
- Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing VET programs, pre-vocational courses, Australian School-based traineeships, apprenticeships, cadetships and vocational placements in schools
- Increased number and range of functioning partnerships that provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' access to post-school education and career pathways
- Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking post-school study



## Leadership and corporate development

To ensure that the Department is recognised as a responsive, innovative and high-achieving organisation that delivers on its commitments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Priorities

- **Increase leaders' capacity to improve outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**
- **Strengthen understanding of issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education**
- **Nurture and support the participation and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our workforce**

## Performance measures

- Level of involvement of leaders and aspiring leaders in relevant professional learning
- Increased number of school leaders implementing effective, evidence-based programs and practices for improving outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Increased recruitment, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, teachers and education workers
- Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees placed in permanent positions
- Participation of staff in programs that target professional working relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous staff

# Key actions

Key actions represent how the priorities and performance measures are translated into actions. Department branches and schools will continue to develop other actions that meet the priorities within individual contexts.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Establish personalised learning strategies that include individual targets and support mechanisms for improved literacy and numeracy for students at or below NAPLAN national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy
- Track and monitor performance, progress and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Target strategies and resources to improve performance and achievement
- Deliver professional learning programs in literacy and numeracy, cultural competence, quality teaching and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and historical knowledge and understanding
- Develop and implement units of work incorporating local Aboriginal content
- Establish supplementary tutoring for students from year 5 to year 12

## SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Implement Department and school-based Reconciliation Action Plans
- Implement functioning Partnership Agreements at school or cluster level
- Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Education Framework
- Track enrolment and attendance of students enrolled in ACT preschool settings
- Establish support structures for students at critical transition points in their schooling
- Implement Successful Learning in the Early Years of Schooling – The Indigenous Parent Factor to increase parent and carer capacity to support early learning
- Establish training programs that target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' involvement and leadership in education decision-making
- Implement guidelines for the consistent use of protocols for "Acknowledgement of Country" and "Welcome to Country"

## STUDENT PATHWAYS AND TRANSITIONS

- Establish mechanisms for the delivery of course and career guidance at key transition points
- Embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Aspirations Program in schools from years 5 to 12
- Conduct comprehensive research on evidence-based programs for disengaged students
- Broker tertiary preparation programs for years 11 and 12 students
- Broker education and career pathways with external agencies
- Track the progress of year 12 graduates in post-school destinations
- Build a database of year 12 graduates and mentors for younger students

## LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT

- Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education priorities in school and network plans, Principal Performance and Development Agreements, business plans and other Departmental plans
- Deliver professional learning to leaders and aspiring leaders through Accepting the Challenge, Quality Teaching and practitioner-based enquiry programs
- Implement cultural competency programs for all staff
- Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy
- Implement induction programs targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officers
- Establish culturally responsive supervision practices

# Glossary

## **Cultural competence**

“Cultural competence” is a term that is used broadly across the education sector. The definition used in the Strategy “sees” a distinct but cumulative relationship between cultural awareness (knowing), cultural sensitivity (appreciating), cultural competence (practising, demonstrating) and cultural proficiency (embedding as organisational practice). It requires the ability to “see” issues and experiences from another person’s perspective and to know oneself in a cultural context – that is to understand oneself as a cultural being. Cultural competence is part of a developmental process underpinned by relationships. It evolves over time.

## **Culturally responsive supervision**

Culturally responsive supervision is about both cultural accountability and cultural development. It ensures that the aspirations of all cultures are respected and explored within the supervisory relationship and that services are delivered through culturally respectful, effective and acceptable practices.

## **Personalised Learning Strategies**

Personalised Learning Strategies refers to the suite of strategies that schools will use to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Strategies depend on the individual needs of the student. They include but are not restricted to Individual Learning Plans, Personalised Learning Plans and Student Pathways Plans. Students in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Aspirations Program will have their goals from the program incorporated into Personalised Learning Plans or Student Pathways Plans. Strategies will be developed in consultation with parents/carers and students.

# For more information

## **ACT Department of Education and Training:**

ACT Department of Education and Training - Everyone matters  
Strategic Plan 2010-2013

[www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au) (refer to Publications/Strategic Plan 2010-2013)

School Improvements in ACT Public Schools  
Directions 2010–2013

[www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au) (refer to Publications)

Reconciliation Matters

ACT Department of Education and Training  
Reconciliation Action Plan – July 2010–June 2011

[www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au) (refer to Publications)

[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au) (refer to Reconciliation Action Plans/who has a RAP/State Government/ACT/DET's 2010–2011 RAP)

## **Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs**

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014

[www.mceecdya.edu.au](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au) (refer to Publications)



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The Bogong moth represents the Bogong time, when different language groups gathered in this area to feast on the plentiful supply of Bogongs. This annual event also enabled exchange between the various clans to carry out initiation ceremonies, reconcile differences and settle disputes.