

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Inspired by the message and example of Jesus Christ, Catholic schools live out a distinctive educational vision. Supported by the Catholic community of which they are a vital part, they invite students and their families into a faith-filled educational experience.

As a key ministry of parishes and the diocese, Catholic schools encourage and support parents in their responsibility for the faith formation of their children. This formation is supported by prayer and opportunities to participate in the life, mission and liturgy of the broader Catholic community.

Our schools commit to:

- nurturing each individual's growth in faith and unique potential
- offering outstanding educational experiences founded on Catholic values
- fostering partnership between parents and staff in the education of their children
- creating communities of respect for each other, the wider society and the earth
- encouraging active engagement in social justice issues, the service of others and the promotion of peace.

Catholic schools are part of a long tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in Australia and this diocese for over 180 years. They fulfil parents' rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own values, beliefs and hopes.

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School Actions	School Policy –

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

1. FOREWORD

A Message from our Bishop

Reading this Policy has been instructive in that it charts the development of values and principles relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

It identifies the address of Pope John Paul 11 to Aboriginal people in Alice Springs (1986) and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Apology to the Stolen Generations (2008) as key stepping stones in a developing understanding of the community's responsibilities towards, and debt to, Indigenous people. I am always reassured when a policy is reviewed and reissued, for it demonstrates a recognition that imagination must always trump complacency.

I am confident that with sound pedagogy, an accurate grasp of the past and a desire for the brightest future, the implementation of this reinvigorated policy will bring renewed enthusiasm for and commitment to effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Most Reverend William Wright

BISHOP OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

A Message from our Director of Schools

Outside St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Adelaide is a sculpture depicting St Mary of the Cross MacKillop walking hand in hand with two children, one a young girl most likely of European descent, the second a young Aboriginal boy.

Aboriginal students across Australia do not presently achieve education outcomes at similar levels to other Australian students. There is an urgent need to promote the educational achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enable them to participate fully and equitably in Australian society. Nationally agreed literacy and numeracy benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7 represent minimum standards of performance. Currently by Year 3 there is already a significant gap between the literacy levels of Aboriginal students and other Australian students. While some progress has been made in recent years, gaps in some areas are not closing but widening.

For Aboriginal students to reach their

“Being Aboriginal has nothing to do with the colour of your skin or the shape of your nose. It is a Spiritual feeling, an identity you know in your heart. It is a unique feeling that may be difficult for non-Aboriginal people to understand.”

Linda Burney, President of the AECG Inc 1994

ABORIGINAL

As the majority of this Diocese is located in the nations of Awabakal, Biripi, Darkijung, Gamilaroi, Wiradjuri, Worimi, Wonnarua peoples,

Roles

- a. Ensure roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal Education Teachers (AETs) and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs), are current by consulting with AETs, AEWs, principals and relevant CSO staff, and made known to other staff and schools.

Networks and Consultation

- a. Provide networking opportunities for AEW's and AETs to meet at least once a year to participate in professional development, to discuss and share roles and responsibilities, school and Diocesan initiatives, and contemporary information.

Teaching & Learning

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7. BUDGET

The Catholic Schools Office supports Aboriginal Education as part of its commitment to the provision of inclusive education. Additional funding is received each year from the Catholic Education Commission through the Aboriginal Student Assistance Program (CASAP) to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. This funding is expended together with recurrent and other relevant commonwealth or state program funds in the following ways:

- a. Employment of staff, with preference given to Aboriginal people in the relevant roles in schools and at the CSO
- b. Assistance with the provision of training and professional development opportunities
- c. Assistance with celebration of significant events and purchase of resources
- d. Provision of scholarships to school leavers for teacher training (two per year)
- e. Offer some support to schools when undertaking a Dare to Lead school 'snapshot.'

Oversight and monitoring of the budget for this area is provided by the Head of Teaching and Learning Services, together with the CSO Aboriginal Education Officer and personnel in Financial Services.

Enacted by the Board of Catholic Education for the Torres Strait Islands on 17.04.12 (MCID 25 ge)

9. APPENDICES

Glossary

The appropriate use of Aboriginal terminology

The use of accurate and non-offensive language is an essential component of Aboriginal cultural respect and communication training www.health.nsw.gov.au

The Department of Health NSW is acknowledged for this section of the Policy. The Department has developed a Guide, 'Communicating Positively', outlining the appropriate use of terminology, relating to Aboriginal people in NSW, with some of the terms adopted and used here in this Policy. They advise the following:

the usage of some terminology may vary with location

if you are unsure about using a particular term, ask the local Aboriginal community/ies to identify their preferred terms.

ABORIGINE/ABORIGINAL

An 'Aboriginal person' or an 'Aborigine' is a person who:

is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia

identifies as an Aboriginal person

is accepted by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal person.

Note: always capitalise the 'A' in 'Aboriginal' as you would other designations like 'Australian', 'Arabic' or 'Nordic'. The word 'aboriginal' with a lowercase 'a' refers to an indigenous person from any part of the world. As such, it does not necessarily refer to the Aboriginal people of Australia.

COUNTRY

'Country' is a term used to describe a culturally defined area of land associated with a particular, culturally distinct group of people or nation. For example, Newcastle is in Awabakal country.

CULTURE

'Culture' consists of 'accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving'. It is a common understanding shared by the members of a group or community. It includes land, beliefs and spirituality, language, ways of living and working, artistic expression, relationships and identity.

ELDER

The traditional meaning of an Aboriginal Elder is someone who has gained recognition within their community as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose cultural knowledge and beliefs. Recognised Elders are highly respected people within Aboriginal communities. In some instances, Aboriginal people above a certain age will refer to themselves

Murri	is usually used by Aboriginal people in north-west NSW and Queensland
Nunga	is usually used by Aboriginal people in South Australia
Yolngu	is usually used by Aboriginal people in Northern Territory (north- east Arnhem Land)
Anangu	is usually used by Aboriginal people in Central Australia
Noongar	is usually used by Aboriginal people in south-west Western Australia

MOB

'Mob' is a term identifying a group of Aboriginal people associated with a particular place or country. 'Mob' is generally used by Aboriginal people and between Aboriginal people. Therefore, it may not be appropriate for non-Aboriginal people to use this term unless this is known to be acceptable to Aboriginal people.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

A Torres Strait Islander or a Torres Strait Islander person is a person/descendant from the Torres Strait Islands which are located to the north of mainland Australia. Note that although not originally from NSW, there are Torres Strait Islander people living in the state.

TRADITIONAL OWNER

'Traditional owner(s)' is an Aboriginal person or group of Aboriginal people directly descended from the original Aboriginal inhabitants of a culturally defined area of land or country, and has a cultural association with this country that derives from the traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the area.

Original Peoples of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Many attempts have been made to establish traditional Aboriginal boundaries and most of these studies have been in the contemporary setting. However, the exact boundaries in many instances will never be known.

AWABAKAL (Awabagal)

The territory of the Awabakal covers the area between the Hunter River and Tuggerah Lakes, NSW, including Lake Macquarie. They are neighbours with the Kuring-gai and Darkinung peoples to the south, the Worimi people to the north, and the Wonnarua people to the west (on the middle reaches of the Hunter River)

BIRIPI

The territory of the Biripi people includes the coastal regions of the Hasting and Manning Rivers. They are neighbours with Daingatti, Worimi and Dharug and Wiradjuri peoples.

DARKINUNG (Darkinjung)

The boundaries of the Darkinung stretches from Wilberforce and Wiseman's Ferry on the Hawkesbury River to Jerry's Plains and Singleton on the Hunter. They are neighbours with the Wonnarua, Awabakal, Kuringai, Dharug and Wiradjuri peoples.

GAMILAROI (Kamilaroi)

The Gamilaroi people are situated in the areas around the Liverpool ranges, the whole of the upper Hunter Valley and both sides of its major tributary the Goulburn River. The topographical centre lay at present day Denman. The Biami Cave at Mibrodale is also a significant landmark of the Aboriginal groups affiliated with the Hunter Valley.

WIRADJURI

The Wiradjuri peoples are those that neighboured the Wonnarua, Gamilaroi and the Awabakal. Their landmarks

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