



# Bound for **Success**

## Cape York and Torres Strait Education Discussion Paper



**Queensland  
Government**  
Department of  
Education and the Arts

Queensland **the Smart State**

## Minister's foreword

---

Bound for Success: Cape York and Torres Strait Education Strategy is underpinned by the most far-reaching educational remodelling in Queensland history – the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF). They are a new foundation of life-long learning for every student and every school in the state.

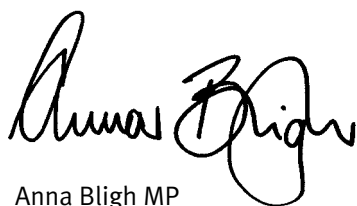
The reforms represent a new highway to knowledge and skills for all young Queenslanders and the ETRF-based Bound for Success strategy represents new horizons for the young Indigenous people of the Cape York and Torres Strait region.

Indigenous people, the government, Education Queensland, educators across all sectors, universities, training institutes and others are working together on this task, approaching every issue honestly and demanding accountability at every level.

Education Queensland will undertake extensive consultation with the Indigenous communities of Cape York and the Torres Strait before releasing a strategy for education in the far north.

This time the strategies must work, action plans must produce results and parties involved must be accountable.

Bound for Success is phrased not just as a hopeful ideal, but also as a definite outcome. We cannot afford to let it be less.



Anna Bligh MP  
Minister for Education and  
Minister for the Arts

## Background

### Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands

Cape York is Queensland's "top end". It is a remote, massive finger of land pointing to Papua New Guinea. Australians from southern states often forget how big Queensland is. From Melbourne to Brisbane is 1700 km. From Brisbane to Cairns is also 1700 km.

Many Queenslanders may not realise how big Cape York is. The maps are misleading. From Cairns, there is still another 1450 km to Thursday Island in Torres Strait at the top of Cape York. That's further than from Brisbane to Townsville.

Beyond Cape York, the Torres Strait region stretches for about 150 kms between the northern most tip of Australia and the south coast of Papua New Guinea.

Cape York is 150 000 sq km in area, and yet in this immense area lives a population of just 20 000, of whom 13 000 are Indigenous – Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Torres Strait's 8000 people are located on 15 outer island communities and two mainland communities, Seisia and Bamaga. The communities range in population from 80 to 750.

### State Schooling in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands

Around 5000 students attend the 32 state schools in Cape York and the Torres Strait, about 4000 or 80 percent of whom are Indigenous. The schools are:

Cape York	Years	Torres Strait Islands	Years
Aurukun State School	P-10	Badu Island State School	P-7
Coen State School	1-7	Northern Area Peninsula State College (Bamaga)	P-12
Cooktown State School	P-12	Poruma State School	P-7
Bloomfield River State School	P-7	Darnley Island State School	P-7
Hopevale State School	1-7	Dauan Island State School	P-7
Western Cape College: Napranum Campus	P-6	Horn Island State School	P-7
Kowanyama State School	P-10	Kubin State School	P-7
Lakeland State School	1-7	Mabuiag Island State School	P-7
Laura State School	1-7	Malu Kiwai State School	P-7
Lockhart State School	P-10	Mer State School	P-7
Western Cape College: Mapoon Campus	1-6	Saibai Island State School	P-7
Pormpuraaw State School	P-7	St Pauls State School	P-7
Western Cape College: Weipa Campus	P-12	Stephen Island State School	P-7
Rossville State School	1-7	Thursday Island State High School	8-12
		Thursday Island State School	P-7
		Warraber Island State School	P-7
		Yam Island State School	P-7
		Yorke Island State School	P-7

# Introduction

---

Bound for Success is a comprehensive response to a critical problem: the poor educational performance of Indigenous students in Cape York and the Torres Strait. Poor educational performance more often than not translates to poor prospects and loss of opportunity.

A Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal Report on Indigenous Education (<http://education.qld.gov.au/publication/production/reports/pdfs/indigenousreport.pdf>) released last year said a number of major reports over the past two decades had reached similar conclusions about the systemic failure of education systems and the need to take urgent action to improve outcomes for Indigenous students.

“For whatever reasons, the exhortations to act and the numerous strategies and government-supported programs have failed to convert the rhetoric into a reality that Indigenous communities can value,” it said.

Other catalysts for change over the past few years include Justice Tony Fitzgerald’s Cape York Justice Study, which focused on the social problems of the Cape; Meeting Challenges, Making Choices, a community-wide blueprint for change that flowed from the Fitzgerald report; and Partners for Success, Education Queensland’s key strategy aimed at improving the education and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders statewide.

The stark facts are that education attendance, achievement and completion rates on the Cape are poor against a background of alcohol and other substance abuse, poor health, high mortality rates and welfare dependency.

Mortality rates are two to three times higher than Queensland’s average, the median age at death at least 20 years lower than that for non-Indigenous people, alcohol-related death rates more than 21 times higher, homicide and violence (much of it alcohol-related) 18 times higher.

Meeting Challenges, Making Choices, a whole-of-government response to the Fitzgerald report, includes an intensified campaign against the causes and effects of alcohol abuse, the development of alcohol management plans, the establishment of community justice groups, and law and order reform.

Police, schools and health workers are further empowered under Meeting Challenges, Making Choices to strengthen child protection strategies and links have been strengthened between Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Child Care workers, schools and police.

SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) child protection teams have been established in communities, a Safer Communities Strategy launched, youth activity programs developed or expanded, and new health and environmental protocols put in place.

Significantly from the perspective of this report, the Cape York Justice Study underscored the critical importance of improved school attendance levels, literacy levels and early childhood and parenting services, and stressed the importance of raising community awareness of the value of education.

“The communities also produce gifted artists, musicians, athletes and intellectuals, and include close-knit families, industrious workers, and resilient people with beautiful children who deserve to participate fully in the opportunities of this, their country,” Justice Fitzgerald said.

# The challenges

---

## The environment and the economy

Some of the challenges for the Cape York and Torres Strait region are obvious: extreme remoteness; a huge, unyielding landscape; a small, sparse population. These factors make it difficult for a viable local economy to get going.

There are significant economic and social challenges for the Indigenous communities. Poverty and disadvantage are widespread in the region. Post-secondary qualification rates are low and employment opportunities are limited. The rate of incarceration is high, as is welfare dependence.

Nearly half the population of the Cape and Torres Strait is school-age children and young people – almost double the proportion of Queensland as a whole.

## Educational resources

Educational resources are challenged by the conditions of Cape York and the Torres Strait. Long distances and difficult access mean that costs are high and infrastructure limited. Small, thinly spread populations mean it is challenging for a comprehensive range of school services to be provided in every location.

In these small, isolated communities, Indigenous school students face hurdles just getting to a secondary school – something that young Queenslanders in urban centres take for granted. Most of the 32 state schools provide primary education. Seven schools (five in Cape York, two in Torres Strait) provide secondary education to Year 10. Of these, only four schools offer education to Year 12.

As a result, students often must leave their home communities to complete their education. Cape and Torres Strait students presently undertake their studies:

- in the home community school to Year 7 or 10
- via distance education to Year 12
- at one of the four regional state high schools offering Year 12
- outside the region, at a state high school or a boarding school.

Students who have to live away from home to continue their schooling face many challenges, and at the moment they mostly do not complete Year 12.

If all students in the Cape and Torres Strait are to have the opportunity to complete school, then education must include preparing them so they are ready for the emotional and academic changes associated with leaving their small home community schools to complete their secondary education in the larger centres. These students must be confident that the work they have done at primary school will set them up for their new high school.

## Educational performance

The educational outcomes for Indigenous school students in the Cape and Torres Strait Islands are lower than for other Queensland students. This is true across a range of indicators: enrolment and attendance, academic performance including literacy, transition and retention, and completion.

### Enrolment and attendance

Because the population of Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands is dispersed across a wide area and is very mobile, it is difficult to tell what proportion of Indigenous children enrol for school. However, a comparison of Census data with school enrolments shows that almost 20 percent of Indigenous 15 to 17-year-olds in the Cape may not be either at school or working. This is at least three times the number of disengaged 15 to 17-year-olds in other areas of Queensland.

Still, enrolments in Cape and Torres Strait secondary schools have improved. From 1999 to 2004, enrolments of Indigenous students in Cape York schools grew by nearly 20 percent and in Torres Strait schools by 12.6 percent.

The picture is also mixed as far as school attendance is concerned. Over the last few years, attendance has increased by five percent for the Cape schools, and there are some Cape schools with excellent attendance levels of more than 90 percent. At the same time, school attendance continues to be a major challenge for some other schools in Cape York. Over a recent 12-month period, the overall attendance rate of Indigenous students in Cape York schools was 78.5 percent.

### **Performance, including literacy**

Literacy and numeracy are assessed with standardised tests in Years 3, 5 and 7 for all Queensland students. The results are compared to national benchmarks for reading, writing, spelling and numeracy.

Performance on these tests shows a similar trend to enrolment and attendance: it is improving in all areas except Year 3 numeracy, but there is still a big gap to close.

### **Transition and retention**

There are critical transition points which make the difference in whether students stay on at school and finish Year 12 or its equivalent.

Since most students in the Cape and Torres Strait Islands have to go to a high school outside their home community, the move from Year 7 to Year 8 is a critical juncture. In 2004, just 55 percent of Indigenous students from Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands made the transition from Year 7 to Year 8.

The data suggests that further critical points for students are staying on from Year 8 to Year 10, and from Year 10 to Year 11. As a result only a quarter of the 4000 Indigenous school students in the Cape and the Torres Strait presently attend secondary school.

However, there is good reason to believe that this pattern can be changed. Current data shows that once students get into high school, most stay to Year 10, and once they get into senior school, most stay to Year 12.

### **Completion**

In recent years, almost all students who went through to Year 12 attained a Senior Certificate. However, these figures represent high proportions of students completing, out of low proportions who stay to Year 12. It is a reminder that the important target is higher retention to Year 12.

As well, receiving a Senior Certificate does not guarantee that a student has completed a program that is appropriate or broad enough for their needs. The evidence suggests that too many Indigenous students leave with neither an Overall Position (OP) or adequate vocational qualifications.

### **Aspiration**

There is another obstacle to educational progress in the Cape and Torres Strait: fostering educational aspirations in the region's communities.

A significant number of Indigenous people in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands have had poor educational experiences and have gained little or no formal qualification. Parents are often unable to give much assistance or encouragement to their children, especially in making informed decisions about educational pathways. Information and resources to assist parents and students is often limited.

International research evidence suggests that there is a strong connection between a student's school performance and the aspirations that they and their family hold for their future.

The goal is to build high expectations among education providers servicing Indigenous students, and high aspirations for educational attainment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families and students.

## Steps to success

---

### The aims

The Education and Training Reforms for the Future are for all young people. The reforms are for students in Early, Middle and Senior Phases of Learning, for those who are bound for tertiary education and those who have other destinations such as TAFE or employment, and for young people who have disengaged from both school and work.

Similarly, Bound for Success sets out to make a difference to the aspirations, opportunities and achievements of all Indigenous children and young people in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands. It is a comprehensive strategy, for students in small communities as well as the bigger towns, for the high achievers and those who are struggling, for the ones who are education-focussed and the ones who have disengaged from school.

Every child can learn, and every Queensland child must be given the opportunity to complete a school education. Young Indigenous people in Cape York and the Torres Strait are entitled to share in a school education that puts them on the road to success. The challenges faced point the way to success, and tell us what to aim for:

- To ensure as many students as possible engage in early education and go into the Prep Year and Year 1.
- To ensure all students receive a grounding in the basics so as many students as possible go on, first to secondary schooling, and then to senior study.
- To ensure as many students as possible complete Year 12 or its equivalent and successfully go on to take up opportunities for further education and training or employment.

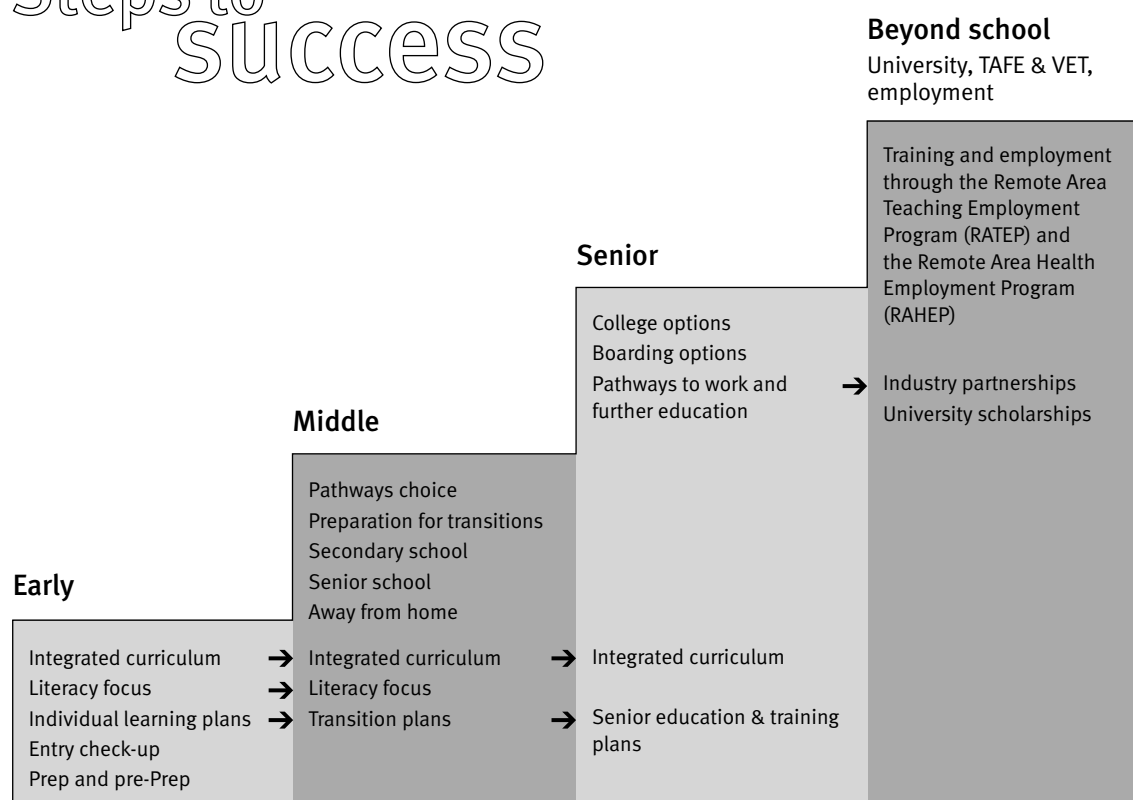
### The actions

Bound for Success is a strategy for all Indigenous students in the Cape and Torres Strait. It is one way to make a difference — one way to make the Education and Training Reforms for the Future happen for all young Queenslanders.

The steps to success are a package of coordinated strategies that:

- encourage early engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- integrate curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting
- prepare and support students for transition into the Middle and Senior Phases
- develop pathways beyond Year 12
- improve educational structures, leadership and accountability
- provide professional development and support for teachers
- inform and engage local communities.

# Steps to Success



## Proposed actions

### Early engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The best way for children to start their schooling is to transition gradually. Across Queensland, this will happen through the introduction of the Preparatory (Prep) Year in 2007.

For Indigenous children in the Cape and Torres Strait, the transition from home and community to school can be challenging, due to the high relative disadvantage faced by these children. Remoteness, cultural differences, English not spoken in the home, and limited community infrastructure all contribute to that disadvantage. To make the transition to a learning environment easier, the government intends to investigate better access to early education services, in the year before children enter Prep.

As in the rest of Queensland, Prep Year commences for all Cape York and Torres Strait schools in 2007. In 2005, Prep is being trialled in the Torres Strait at Badu Island State School.

#### Action 1.

***Education Queensland will continue to provide early education services for Cape York and the Torres Strait communities.***

Education Queensland will continue to support pre-Prep early education services in those communities where they currently exist, to ensure high levels of participation in the transition to the Preparatory Year.

A key focus of pre-Prep services will be engaging families and communities, and providing positive learning experiences.



Where school based pre-Prep services do not currently exist, but there are early childhood education and/or care services, Education Queensland will investigate the provision of appropriate early childhood services in conjunction with partners such as the Crèche and Kindergarten Association, other Queensland Government agencies and Australian Government agencies.

Education Queensland will work with other providers of pre-Prep services to ensure curriculum is consistent across providers and continuous between pre-Prep and Prep, within the local curriculum framework and based on the Queensland Studies Authority guidelines.

## **Action 2.**

***Education Queensland will introduce a new diagnostic tool to assess the learning needs of every student entering school.***

From 2006, Education Queensland will introduce a specific monitoring and assessment tool for children in the Cape and Torres Strait Islands at their point of entry to school, whether it is Prep or Year 1.

The new diagnostic tool is being developed by the Queensland Studies Authority to assess the learning needs of students starting school.

Use of this tool could be expanded to the pre-Prep year to ensure that all children entering the Prep Year in the Cape and Torres Strait have their learning needs met. This action would not only target the specific learning needs of each child, but would also allow teachers to monitor a child's progress.

## **Integrated curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting**

---

Students in the Cape and Torres Strait need to study a curriculum that connects with their local experience, but can take them anywhere.

Many students move with their families around the region, and many need to change schools to complete their high school education. As well, a high number of teachers or educational leaders are new to the area each year, or move between schools.

In practical terms, it is expected that in the future most students will complete their primary education to Year 7 in their home community, and then transition out of their home communities to undertake their secondary education at a regional State College, or at a non-regional school or boarding school.

Together, these factors call for a curriculum for the Cape and Torres Strait that is:

- connected to local conditions and needs
- comparable with other areas of the state
- consistent across the region
- continuous through P-12.

## **Action 3.**

***Education Queensland will introduce culturally appropriate, rigorous assessment tasks for schools in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands and based on the standards outlined in the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework.***

Within the context of the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework, the curriculum for schools in the Cape and Torres Strait will recognise local cultures, and better fit with the local environment and needs.

The curriculum will strengthen the focus on attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy, and would be based on the Rich Tasks approach that has been used with significant success across all Cape York schools in the last three years. Students will be engaged with the real world in complex ways, and challenged to meet high standards. Rich Tasks also enable teachers to respond to the local context and develop culturally relevant and appropriate learning.

Bringing all Cape and Torres Strait Island schools under the one curriculum model will introduce a higher level of consistency, comparability and quality in classroom learning across the region and in comparison to the rest of Queensland.

#### **Action 4.**

***Education Queensland will provide all students completing Prep and/or starting Year 1 with an Individual Learning Plan, to be revised each year.***

By 2006, Indigenous children in the Cape and Torres Strait will complete the Prep Year and/or start Year 1 with an Individual Learning Plan, which identifies each child's strengths and areas of learning need.

Individual Learning Plans will be developed by teachers in collaboration with parents or guardians and informed by the new diagnostic tool outlined in Action 2. Teachers will pay particular attention to literacy attainment and English as a Second Language.

Individual Learning Plans will be reviewed and tailored over time to reflect the changing needs of students and their increasing maturity in participating in their learning directions. In the Middle Phase, the plans will emphasise grounding in the basics, and preparation for the transition to Senior options. At this point, Individual Learning Plans will dovetail with students' Senior Education and Training Plans, which will set out their directions for the senior years.

#### **Action 5.**

***Education Queensland will introduce a 'progress map' to measure, describe and monitor individual and group progress in literacy and numeracy over time.***

It is important that students' learning is supported across the years of schooling in key areas such as literacy and numeracy.

Assessments in literacy and numeracy will be conducted each year in the Early and Middle Phases of Learning to provide accurate, timely information about student learning needs.

The introduction of progress maps will make explicit what is meant by growth or progress, and track individual and group growth as students tackle increasingly complex competencies.

From 2006, schools in the Cape and Torres Strait will make better use of benchmarking data, in association with school-based assessment, to identify students requiring additional support in literacy and numeracy.

This information will be incorporated into students' Individual Learning Plans to ensure that timely and relevant interventions can be put in place and the progress of students can be monitored more closely.

#### **Action 6.**

***Education Queensland will lift the bar for vocational qualifications in Cape York and Torres Strait schools.***

Students need to be encouraged to have high expectations. From 2006, Certificate I and II vocational study will be seen as a pathway, not as a destination.

The minimum standard required for all students completing Year 12 will be a Queensland Senior Certificate or a Certificate III in approved training.

Students will be identified in the Senior Phase of Learning as potential candidates for recruitment to the Remote Area Teacher Education Program, as well as other further education and training pathways. The Executive Director (Schools) for Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands will be responsible for mentoring successful candidates.

## Preparation and support for transitions in the Middle and Senior Phases

---

Data shows that Indigenous students do not participate and achieve at the same levels as the general student population. There is a significant drop-off in the number of students at key junctures – including the transition from primary to secondary schooling at Years 7-8, and again as students transition into the senior years at Years 10-11.

Often these transitions coincide with the move to a new school, and for many students in the Cape and Torres Strait the new school will be away from their home community.

Successfully coping with these transitions and moves is vital to students' success at school.

### Action 7.

***Education Queensland will partner with the Australian Government to ensure that all Cape and Torres Strait Island students leaving their home community would be provided with transition support and follow-up.***

Education Queensland will work with the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training to ensure that all students leaving their home community will be provided with transition support and follow-up.

The Queensland and Australian Governments have established a Transitions Support Unit in Cape York, to provide “on the ground” support to students in boarding schools or hostels. Transition support officers help students settle into their new school, overcome practical challenges, maintain their relationship with their home community and family, and remain engaged in education. The support officers are placed in key locations across Queensland including Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane – the main destinations where students from the north pursue their secondary educations outside the region.

Education Queensland is committed to maintaining this current service and, in 2006, expanding the work of the Transition Support Unit to include students coming from the Torres Strait Islands. The Queensland Government will also seek Australian Government commitment to ongoing joint funding of both the current and expanded transition services for the region.

Education Queensland will also work with schools in the Cape and Torres Strait to establish peer support and mentoring programs for young people who are studying away from their home communities. State schools will act as a link to students away from their home communities by facilitating where possible:

- regular contact between the students and their families
- regular flow of information between the recipient boarding school and the community school
- ongoing support to students before, during and after their transition.

### Action 8.

***Education Queensland will develop and implement a comprehensive student tracking system for all students across the P-12 years of schooling and beyond.***

Tracking students' school pathways is a critical issue, both for primary and post-primary students. Currently there is no way of knowing whether a student who has left one primary school has enrolled in another. In remote communities without secondary school facilities, it is difficult to tell whether students leaving primary school have successfully gone on to secondary education. Other students disengage from secondary school, or are unsuccessful in transitioning to boarding schools.

Education Queensland will seek the support of the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training to establish from 2006, a central database that will track and monitor students' progress through different educational institutions — both state and non-state — across the P–12 years of schooling. The database will provide schools in the Cape and Torres Strait with valuable information on participation, retention and completion rates. It will also help action to re-engage young people who have disengaged from secondary schooling.

## Pathways beyond Year 12

---

If students are to stay engaged in education and training to Year 12, they need to know that they can get jobs if they stay at school and gain relevant and portable qualifications. They also need to see role models — other Indigenous young people like themselves who have succeeded.

### Action 9.

***The Queensland Government will work with the Australian Government, vocational education and training providers and universities to investigate opportunities to expand the Remote Area Teacher Employment Program to new and emerging industries.***

The Remote Area Teacher Employment Program is an initiative which assists Indigenous students in rural and remote centres throughout Queensland to achieve either qualified teacher aide or registered teacher status by being supported to study in the communities in which they live and work. From 2006, Education Queensland will create a number of places available in the program in a range of new sites within the Cape and Torres Strait region.

The Queensland Government will also look to develop employment and training opportunities with partners in new and emerging industries in the region. Health care is such an industry, and Queensland Health has committed to pilot a Remote Area Health Employment Program initiative in Weipa to train and employ health professionals. The model could also apply to police, environmental management and managing aspects of community affairs.

In addition, Education Queensland will work with industries and local employers to investigate other pathways for students who have completed school. This will further consolidate established Education Queensland industry links, such as the Comalco partnerships, which offer employment to all Indigenous young people in the local area who complete their schooling.

Industry links will be enhanced through District Youth Achievement Plans. The plans will include regular reporting of outcomes for school-based apprenticeships, traineeships, Year 12 destination outcomes and Year 12 school performance.

### Action 10.

***Education Queensland will investigate expanding the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship program to support high-achieving students to undertake further education and employment opportunities in their chosen fields.***

Education Queensland is a major sponsor of the Queensland Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education to Employment Scheme. The scheme provides financial sponsorship and mentoring for Indigenous students completing Years 10, 11 and 12 and is specifically designed to retain Indigenous students in school to complete Year 12.

The scheme is open to all Indigenous high school students across the state. From 2006, Education Queensland will specifically direct up to half the places in this scheme to students from Cape York and the Torres Strait, who make up a significant proportion of the state's Indigenous student population.

Education Queensland will also recognise excellence by making annual awards to Queensland Indigenous students in Years 7-9 and Years 10-12. Among these awards will be scholarships for Year 12 students, to assist in their further education and training.

Education Queensland will also work closely with the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training to ensure that scholarship programs supported by both agencies maximise opportunities for talented young Indigenous Queenslanders from remote communities.

## Leadership and accountability

---

If the steps to success are to work for students in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands, then Education Queensland must be organised to support them, and our school leaders and staff must be suitably skilled and equipped.

Strong connections between schools, combined with effective educational leadership, are needed to ensure that education is consistent and continuous for students across different schools, distant places, and the span of years.

Strong system leadership is widely acknowledged as a key success factor in the improvement of Indigenous education outcomes. This is evidenced by the successes of Cherbourg State School, Western Cape State College, and Badu Island State School, which have all shown dramatic improvements as a result of strong leadership focussed on education outcomes, accountability, and community engagement and aspiration.

The Ministerial Advisory Council for Educational Renewal, in its recent Report on Indigenous Education, pointed to the need to articulate the accountabilities of education officers and teachers for improved Indigenous student outcomes.

### Action 11.

***Education Queensland will create clusters of schools connected to four proposed State Colleges in the Cape and Torres Strait region.***

Every one of the region's 32 schools will belong to one of approximately eight clusters, to be established in consultation with Cape York and Torres Strait communities. Each cluster will be under the leadership of a single principal.

The clusters will support consistent curriculum across schools separated by stretches of land and sea. They will provide a way for schools to coordinate their curriculum, share their teaching strategies, and spread their successes.

Education Queensland has already created the Western Cape State College based at Weipa, and the Northern Area Peninsula State College, based at Bamaga. The experience of Western Cape State College shows that the college model can produce significant increases in the number of students attending school, and improved outcomes for those students.

It is proposed that in 2006, two more multi-campus colleges will be established: Eastern Cape State College centred on Cooktown, and Torres Strait Islands State College centred on Thursday Island. This will be subject to consultation with the relevant communities.

The four State Colleges will work closely with the cluster schools in their area, facilitating a unified educational vision and curriculum.

Together, the State Colleges and the school clusters will support the steps to success, by laying a foundation for integrated curriculum, continuous pathways from P-12, and a range of secondary options. They will build stronger educational leadership and clearer accountabilities.

**Action 12.**

***Leadership accountability will be strengthened across all schools in the Cape and Torres Strait.***

As part of its new regional structure, Education Queensland will appoint a Regional Director for Far North Queensland, and an Executive Director (Schools) specifically for Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands. These two senior positions will provide high-level leadership to drive educational improvements, and clear points of accountability for the management of Indigenous education in the far north.

Education Queensland will apply a new accountability matrix across the Cape and Torres Strait as recommended by the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal. The matrix will allocate and align the accountabilities of Education Queensland officers, from central office staff to district officers, to principals and teachers in the classrooms, to ensure that all are aware of their professional responsibilities. It will encourage them to discharge those responsibilities by challenging, supporting, developing, monitoring and intervening in the interests of better education outcomes for Indigenous young people.

From 2006, Education Queensland will develop and implement a new program focussed on the development and recruitment of highly skilled leaders to schools in Cape York and Torres Strait Islands. Key elements of this program include the provision of mentoring and support from the newly formed Institute for Indigenous Leadership and Education at Cherbourg, Centres of Excellence and the Indigenous Education and Training Alliance. This will maximise school leadership by building on benefits of school clustering arrangements and consideration of incentives such as salary, study leave and work placements.

**Action 13.**

***Education Queensland will build the leadership and policy capacity of the system in Indigenous education by investing in significant community leadership initiatives.***

Education Queensland is committed to building leadership and policy capacity in Indigenous education through investing in two significant community leadership initiatives — the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership and the Institute for Indigenous Leadership and Education at Cherbourg.

The Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership focuses on policy innovation and leadership development. The Institute for Leadership and Education at Cherbourg has been established to broker and deliver high-quality leadership training within the education and schooling sectors and, through the Queensland University of Technology, across government and the private sector.

Both are addressing many of the issues related to the challenges schools in the Cape and Torres Strait Islands face in improving the education outcomes of Indigenous students.

## Professional development and support

---

**Action 14.**

***Education Queensland will provide professional development and learning for principals and teachers that focuses on supporting effective practices, especially in the areas of literacy, early intervention and English as a Second Language.***

The Indigenous Education and Training Alliance offers a range of professional development and training opportunities to support schools seeking continuous improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Alliance would work closely with principals and teachers in Cape York and Torres Strait schools to facilitate the delivery of a professional learning program that focuses on supporting effective practices in the areas of literacy, early intervention and English as a Second Language. This would draw on current research and evidence, including

the teaching of English as a Second Language and early literacy intervention. It would be aligned to the Education Queensland Literacy Framework for Action, which focuses on literacy leadership, the teaching and learning of literacy, and the literacy needs of children and young people Years P-10.

Education Queensland will also raise with the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training the lack of funding parity in the English as a Second Language program. Currently, eligible refugee and humanitarian entrants receive more funding per capita under the English as a Second Language – New Entrants program than eligible Indigenous students who also have English as a second language.

### **Action 15.**

***Centres of Excellence for Indigenous education will support schools, their leaders and teachers in the Cape and Torres Strait to improve students' education outcomes.***

Education Queensland has identified eight schools as Centres of Excellence in Indigenous Education, through the Partners for Success strategy. These schools showcase the practices that enabled them to meet or exceed the targets in the priority areas. All have demonstrated significant improvements in the attendance, attainment and completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Centres of Excellence will work exclusively in the first instance with schools, their leaders and teachers in the Cape and Torres Strait to develop and implement proven ways of improving the education of the region's Indigenous students.

Support for schools will include:

- teacher exchange programs between schools and Centres of Excellence
- visits to schools by principals of the network of High Achiever Principals in Indigenous Education
- online support, including access to case studies and professional development action plans, specifically designed to address the Partners for Success key priorities.

## **Informing and engaging families and communities**

---

Students need support from their parents or carers and community to help them succeed in secondary education. Parental and community attitudes and expectations are just as important to their success as schooling itself. Parents and the community are also entitled to clear, consistent and regular reports about student and school progress.

Last year the Queensland Government announced a range of changes to improve the ways schools across Queensland report on their performance and to provide more relevant information to parents. The changes will lead to better education for students and stronger partnerships between schools and parents.

They include a requirement for schools to publish information about their annual performance, provide at least two written student reports a year for parents and offer parents a parent-teacher meeting each semester.

This draft strategy proposes a range of additional reporting guarantees for Cape and Torres Strait parents and communities.

### **Action 16.**

***Education Queensland will provide parents with information and advice, and engage parents and communities in decisions, to support aspirations for educational improvement.***

Schools in remote communities are best positioned to understand the educational needs and future requirements of students when considering the most viable and appropriate secondary education pathway. To help parents make informed decisions about the type of secondary education pathway

that suits their child's needs, school staff will work with parents and the community to advise them of the range of factors they need to consider.

Principals of schools in the Cape and Torres Strait will establish or extend good working relationships with their schools' Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs). Where P&Cs do not exist, school principals will work with community councils, parents and elders to establish a P&C. Principals will work with the Executive Director (Schools) for the Cape and Torres Strait to establish targeted short-term and long-term goals with communities, parents and P&Cs.

#### **Action 17.**

***Education Queensland will investigate more comprehensive public reporting of education outcomes to parents and communities, including reports on attendance and literacy performance.***

Better school reporting accountability will be established by informing students and their parents about how well they are progressing at school. This information is critical to enabling parents to play a greater role in the education of their children as well as highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for further learning.

Building on the broader reforms around schools reporting, Education Queensland is committed to making reporting on students' performance more frequent, more accessible and more meaningful.

From the 2006 school year, Education Queensland will ensure that a six-monthly report on education outcomes is provided to parents and Cape and Torres Strait communities. The reports will include the following information:

- levels of enrolment, school attendance, and literacy attainment compared with state and national benchmarks
- enrolment, attendance and achievement for students completing their secondary schooling at state schools
- information on transitioning students attending non-state boarding schools
- annual destination information for students who have recently completed schooling in the previous year.

Each school principal will also provide a regular (at least quarterly) report to the local community council in each school in the Cape and Torres Strait.

Both the six-monthly and more regular reports will respect student's privacy. Public reports would relate to the whole school or group, and would not identify individual students.

As well, parents will be provided with specific information on how well their child is performing against state and national benchmarks. Parent-teacher interviews will be undertaken in a variety of ways and settings to ensure parents feel comfortable and are engaged.



## What next?

---

### Consultation

Successful implementation of a range of strategies and actions relies on the strength of the partnerships between educators and local communities.

Education Queensland will hold regional education roundtable discussions during 2005, to engage key stakeholders from Cape York and the Torres Strait in discussions based on this draft strategy.

The roundtable discussions will include input from the staff and parents from all 32 Cape and Torres Strait school communities. Local school planning and engagement will supplement the roundtable consultations.

The roundtable discussions will provide an opportunity to consult on the draft strategy and will include:

- overviewing the issues impacting upon education for students from Cape and the Torres Strait including current patterns of participation, attainment and completion
- identifying the salient points in the education continuum where intervention is required
- highlighting current effective strategies, and identifying opportunities for further intervention
- seeking feedback on the range of issues identified as impacting upon secondary education as well as potential strategies for their resolution
- validating the general direction in developing a comprehensive education strategy
- seeking commitment from stakeholders to work collaboratively in developing a comprehensive response to secondary education.

### For further information contact

Mr Robert Barton

Department of Education and the Arts

Telephone 07 3237 0785

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/jnt-venture/atsi/success/>

email: [strategicpolicy@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:strategicpolicy@qed.qld.gov.au)