



# Bound for Success

## Education Strategy for Cape York



**Queensland  
Government**

Department of  
Education and the Arts

Queensland the **Smart State**

Published by:  
Strategic Policy and Education Futures  
Department of Education and the Arts  
30 Mary Street  
Brisbane Q 4001

ISBN: 0 7345 1982 6  
ID No: 060058

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Front cover:  
Leoni Sandy  
Formerly of Lockhart River State School, now at Western Cape College (Weipa)  
*Claudine River Waterfall 2005*  
Acrylic on paper  
Commissioned by Cairns Regional Gallery for inclusion in *Home Island, Home Country*  
– a Cairns Regional Gallery touring exhibition

Turtle graphic:  
Sidney Smith  
Laura State School  
*Bark picture 2005* (detail)  
Acrylic on paper  
Commissioned by Cairns Regional Gallery for inclusion in *Home Island, Home Country*  
– a Cairns Regional Gallery touring exhibition

## Foreword

Education is a vital tool for equipping young people with the ability to make choices – choices that can improve their lives. It impacts on future employment, social status and young people's ability to participate in their communities.

The Cape York region is a unique area in Queensland. It covers 150,000 square kilometres of land and much of the population is spread sparsely across Cape York. It is also home to 1,450 Indigenous students, many of whom live in Aboriginal communities. To date, despite some significant gains, educational achievement in Cape York lags behind desirable achievement levels.

The Queensland Government recognises that students in Cape York must overcome many obstacles to participate in education. In consultation with the community and important stakeholders such as the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, the Government will develop mechanisms for greater engagement with communities to improve educational outcomes for students in Cape York.

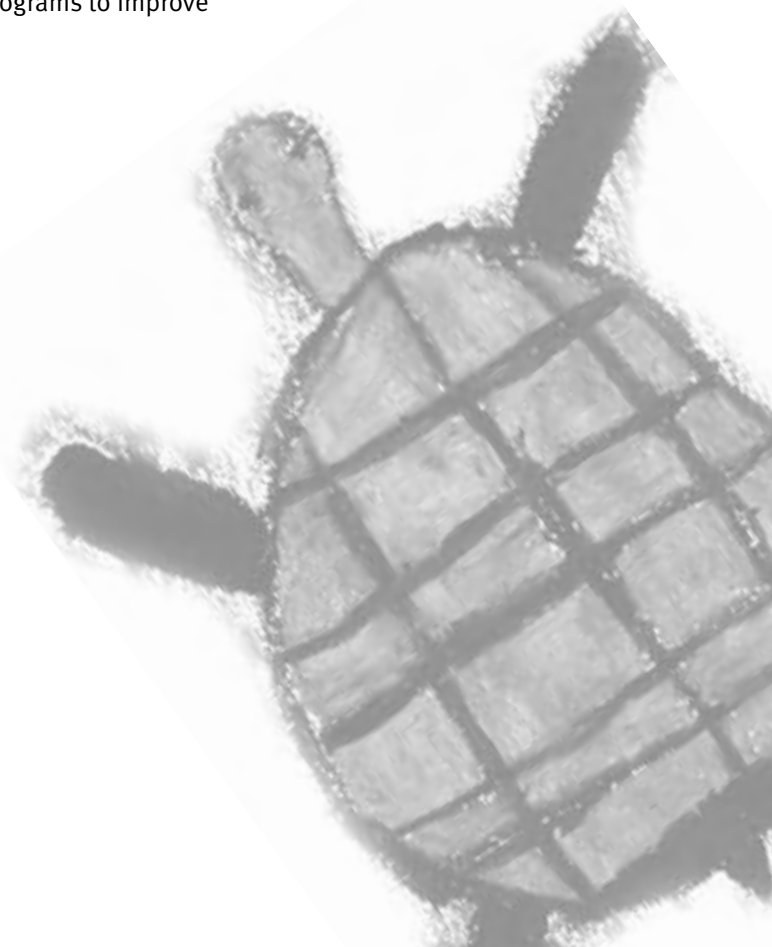
To this end, the Government will establish a Cape York Education Leaders Forum with representatives from communities in Cape York which will meet to discuss issues facing students in Cape York and to look at ways to improve educational outcomes into the future.

*The Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Cape York* is a comprehensive response to the education needs of students in the Cape York region.

It includes actions to facilitate community engagement, improve the quality of education services and implement complementary programs to improve education outcomes in the region.



Rod Welford  
Minister for Education and  
Minister for the Arts



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# Introduction

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In May 2005, the Queensland Government released the *Bound for Success: Cape York and Torres Strait Education Discussion Paper*. It was designed to generate thoughts and ideas and stimulate discussion about how to improve the educational achievement of Indigenous students in the Far North to ensure that:

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

Following the release of the discussion paper a series of education round tables with key stakeholders in Cape York and the Torres Strait took place to provide input into the issues surrounding education in the region. Representatives of communities, community councils and shires, schools, Queensland and Australian Government agencies, peak Indigenous community organisations, business and industry, the non-government education sector and other education and training providers attended these round tables.

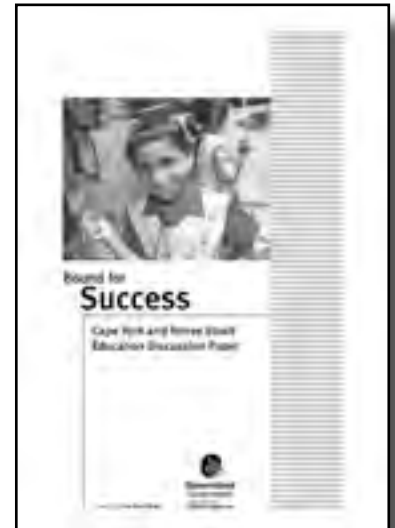
As a result of the consultation process, the Queensland Government released, in December 2005, an education strategy to improve educational outcomes in the Torres Strait.

The *Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Cape York* continues this work and is a response to the educational outcomes for Indigenous students in Cape York – which are on average lower than for other Queensland students. This is evident across a range of indicators including: attendance rates, literacy and numeracy levels, going on to high school, retention and school completion.

Three key themes characterise this strategy:

- Strong commitment from communities and government to work in true partnership based on mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of families, communities and schools
- Good quality education stimulates high aspirations and high expectations which in turn stimulates educational achievement, and
- Best practice solutions underpinned by research are needed for the issues which affect education in the Cape York region.

This strategy responds to the issues raised by stakeholders and presents a way forward for working with and supporting schools and communities to improve the educational outcomes of children and young people in Cape York.



## About the Cape York region

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### Cape York region

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Area:        | 150 000 sq km  |
| Population:  | 20 000   |
| Communities: | Range in population from 200 to 2 500                        |
| Schools:     | 13 state schools with eight primary, three P-10 and two P-12 |
| Students:    | 2 197<br>(66 percent Indigenous)                             |

The *Bound for Success* discussion paper described significant environmental, economic, social, and educational challenges faced by Cape York communities.

The Cape York region is a vast area of 150,000 square kilometres and yet in this large area lives an estimated population of just 20,000, of whom 13,000 are Indigenous. Some of the challenges for the Cape York region are obvious: extreme remoteness and isolation, a huge unyielding landscape, a small sparse population and low per-capita income. These factors make it difficult for a viable economy.

Poverty and disadvantage is widespread across Indigenous communities in Cape York. Low post-secondary qualification rates and low literacy and numeracy levels mean the workforce is generally unskilled. Rates of incarceration are high, as is illness and mortality. Underlying this crisis are high levels of welfare dependency, substance abuse and violence.

Basic infrastructure and services are challenged by the conditions of Cape York. Adequate services and infrastructure can be found in the townships of Weipa and Cooktown. There are large differences in the smaller, more remote Indigenous communities. Weipa is 801 km north-west of Cairns by road, a journey of 10–12 hours, if passable and depending on conditions. This can be compared with Sydney to Melbourne via the Hume Highway, a distance of 877 km. It is difficult to appreciate the combined effects of wet season, distance, poor roads and poor transport unless personally experienced. The wet season is variable and can typically extend from mid December to early April. This means that for up to four months of the year the roads may be impassable and all Cape York communities north of Cooktown may be isolated.

The conditions of Cape York make it challenging for comprehensive education services to be provided in every location. These conditions also make it difficult to retain and attract appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and school leaders in remote Cape York communities. The Queensland Government through state schooling is the major provider of primary and secondary schooling in Cape York. A list of schools operating in Cape York is provided opposite.

The scope of this strategy will involve these schools and Indigenous students and Cape York communities that are served by these 13 state schools. Although located in Cape York, the northern peninsula communities of Bamaga, Injinoo, New Mapoon and Umagico are not included within the scope of this strategy. Served by the Northern Peninsula Area State College in Bamaga, Indigenous students and people of these communities have been included within the *Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Torres Strait* released in December 2005.

All of the 13 state schools provide primary education; five schools provide secondary education to Year 10. Of these, two schools offer education to Year 12, namely Western Cape College (Weipa) and Cooktown State School. In 2006, a total of 2,197 students are enrolled in the schools listed opposite, 1,450 (or 66 percent) of whom are Indigenous. The largest total school enrolment, 852, is at Western Cape College (Weipa Campus), while 388 students are enrolled

at Cooktown State School. The other 11 smaller remote schools serve the remaining 957 students, 882 (or 92 percent) of whom are Indigenous.

From 2007, a non-compulsory, full-time Preparatory Year of education before Year 1 will be available in every school in Queensland including those in Cape York. In recognition of the early learning needs of many Indigenous students, pre-Prep services are currently provided in five state schools listed below. Other early education services are also provided through childcare services (C&K Association) in Hopevale, Napranum and Wujal Wujal (Bloomfield River).

In many of these small, isolated communities, students face hurdles just getting to a secondary school – something that can be taken for granted in urban areas. As a result many Indigenous students need to move away from their family and local community to access high school. It is estimated that 240 Indigenous students from Cape York attend secondary schools in larger urban centres such as Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane.

#### Schools in Cape York (2006)

| SCHOOL                              | YEARS | ENROLMENTS |      |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------------|------|
|                                     |       | A&TSI      | ALL  |
| 1. Bloomfield River State School    | P-7   | 70         | 82   |
| 2. Coen State School                | 1-7   | 41         | 41   |
| 3. Cooktown State School            | P-12  | 129        | 388  |
| 4. Hopevale State School            | 1-7   | 111        | 111  |
| 5. Kowanyama State School*          | P-10  | 189        | 192  |
| 6. Lakeland State School            | 1-7   | 2          | 21   |
| 7. Laura State School               | 1-7   | 12         | 15   |
| 8. Lockhart River State School*     | P-10  | 100        | 108  |
| 9. Pormpuraaw State School*         | P-7   | 99         | 100  |
| 10. Rossville State School          | 1-7   | 5          | 26   |
| 11. Western Cape College – Aurukun* | P-10  | 205        | 209  |
| 12. Western Cape College – Mapoon*  | 1-6   | 48         | 52   |
| 13. Western Cape College – Weipa    | P-12  | 439        | 852  |
| Total                               |       | 1450       | 2197 |

\*Education Queensland schools offering pre-Prep services







### Partnerships Queensland

Under *Partnerships Queensland*, community engagement is fundamental to the Queensland Government's new way of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Negotiation tables are the main avenue used in many communities to resolve priority issues at the local level.

*Partnerships Queensland* recognised there is a need for greater integration of services to maximise the benefit to Indigenous Queenslanders. The development of cross-agency response plans will facilitate greater interaction between agencies and strengthen alignment in their program development and service delivery.

The Department of Education and the Arts leads the development of an integrated cross-government response plan – the Successful Childhood (7–14 years) response plan. The vision for this plan is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in this age group are healthy, safe, educated and nurtured and that their outcomes and experiences are comparable with those of non-Indigenous children.

Service delivery plans will be developed at the local level through the negotiation table process.

## Part of a larger effort by government

The *Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Cape York* is part of a larger commitment by government to address the needs of Indigenous children and young people, particularly those living in rural and remote locations where disadvantage and need is greatest.

*Partnerships Queensland* is the Queensland Government's whole-of-government approach to working with Indigenous communities to improve the quality of life of Indigenous people. It includes input from all government areas and ensures that all levels of government, community, business and non-government sectors work together to better meet community needs.

In addition *Partners for Success* is the Government's key education strategy for the improvement of education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people in Queensland. The *Education and Training Reforms for the Future* (ETRF) is the Queensland Government's blueprint for developing a better education system across the early, middle and senior phases of learning. ETRF requires education service providers to engage meaningfully with Indigenous communities to pursue real education outcomes that are valued by communities.

The *Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Cape York* provides a vehicle on which to build and address government and community priorities and reforms. It recognises that education outcomes of Cape York students are influenced by a range of factors (e.g. health, family income and location) and that a joined-up approach to service delivery is required.





## Three-part approach to education reform in Cape York

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Education reform in Cape York is not a process which can be completed overnight nor will it be accomplished by a single solution. The first step in this process is for government to acknowledge that it does not have all the answers. This strategy is not simply a policy and a program created outside of Cape York and imposed on the area. Rather it is about working with the community to explore issues and develop workable solutions. This strategy is the first phase of an ongoing commitment by the Queensland Government to improving educational results for the children and young people of Cape York.

The Government has listened to the community. At the round table in 2005 community members identified the need for the community to be able to influence and shape the direction of education services in Cape York. This strategy is based on the premise that improving community engagement and active participation by parents and the community will contribute to improved schools and educational outcomes. It involves schools, teachers, parents and the community working together to shape the future direction of education services in Cape York.

However, educational reform is not only about engaging the community. The provision of high-quality education is the core business of all who work in the education sector. Schools and teachers must be able to show that the views of the community are being built into and shaping the delivery of quality education services to Cape York students.

Finally, it is not possible to succeed in improving the educational outcomes for students in the Cape York region without understanding the complex and interconnected sets of issues that face students and the best ways to address these issues. A range of factors, including health, housing, employment and family and community economics affect student welfare and learning outcomes. For this reason action research forms a vital part of this strategy. An ongoing research agenda, which will investigate both issues and solutions, is fundamental to developing and implementing effective tailored solutions in the future.

This three-part approach can be summed up as:

- 1 **Community engagement in education** – Engaging with the community to develop strong demand for education
- 2 **Provision of high-quality education services** – Ongoing commitment by government to improve the quality of education delivered to Cape York communities, their children and young people
- 3 **Ongoing action research for continuous improvement and reform** – Conduct ongoing action research to support real and sustainable progress in education improvement and reform.



# 1

## Community engagement in education

Community engagement in education is fundamental to this new approach. The Queensland Government recognises and acknowledges the vital role that communities have in raising issues with government and in working together in partnership to find solutions to address the diverse educational needs in Cape York.

Cape York communities, families and parents have key roles and responsibilities in contributing to the education of their children and young people. Parents, caregivers and families have a crucial role in building high aspirations, developing strong self-identities and influencing positive attitudes towards schooling. Communities have a major role in promoting the value of education and demanding education services that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of students and their communities.

In turn, the Queensland Government through state schools is responsible for the provision of quality education services to Cape York communities. This means making sure teachers and school leaders working in the Cape are of a high quality, committed to making a difference, well prepared and appropriately skilled. It also means working effectively with other agencies to develop and strengthen services that support the achievement of improved educational outcomes.

Cape York schools and principals have a responsibility for being responsive to community views and needs. For schools, this may mean sharing performance information transparently, being flexible and creative about how education is delivered and being willing to learn from and work with Indigenous communities about what might work best for their children and young people. Individual students too have a responsibility to attend school regularly, to participate actively and be accountable for their own learning.

By engaging parents and communities and building strong demand for education, the community engagement and governance arrangements outlined in this section will help schools deliver better services and meet local needs.

### Regional engagement in education

While there are specific issues relevant to individual communities, many communities and schools in Cape York face a number of common challenges including social and economic disadvantage, health issues and geographic isolation.

The *Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Cape York* will provide Cape York communities with the basis for a coordinated regional approach to addressing the unique education challenges they face, in partnership with schools and government. It involves the creation of a Cape York Education Leaders Forum ('the Forum'). The Forum will be supported by a Forum Working Group and a Secretariat.

Through this approach school principals will have an opportunity to engage, influence and learn from Indigenous communities. Government will have an avenue for more direct consultation and negotiation with Cape York

communities on important education and training issues. However, most significantly this approach will foster community engagement, enabling Cape York communities to have greater involvement in decision making to help shape education policy and delivery of education services across the region.

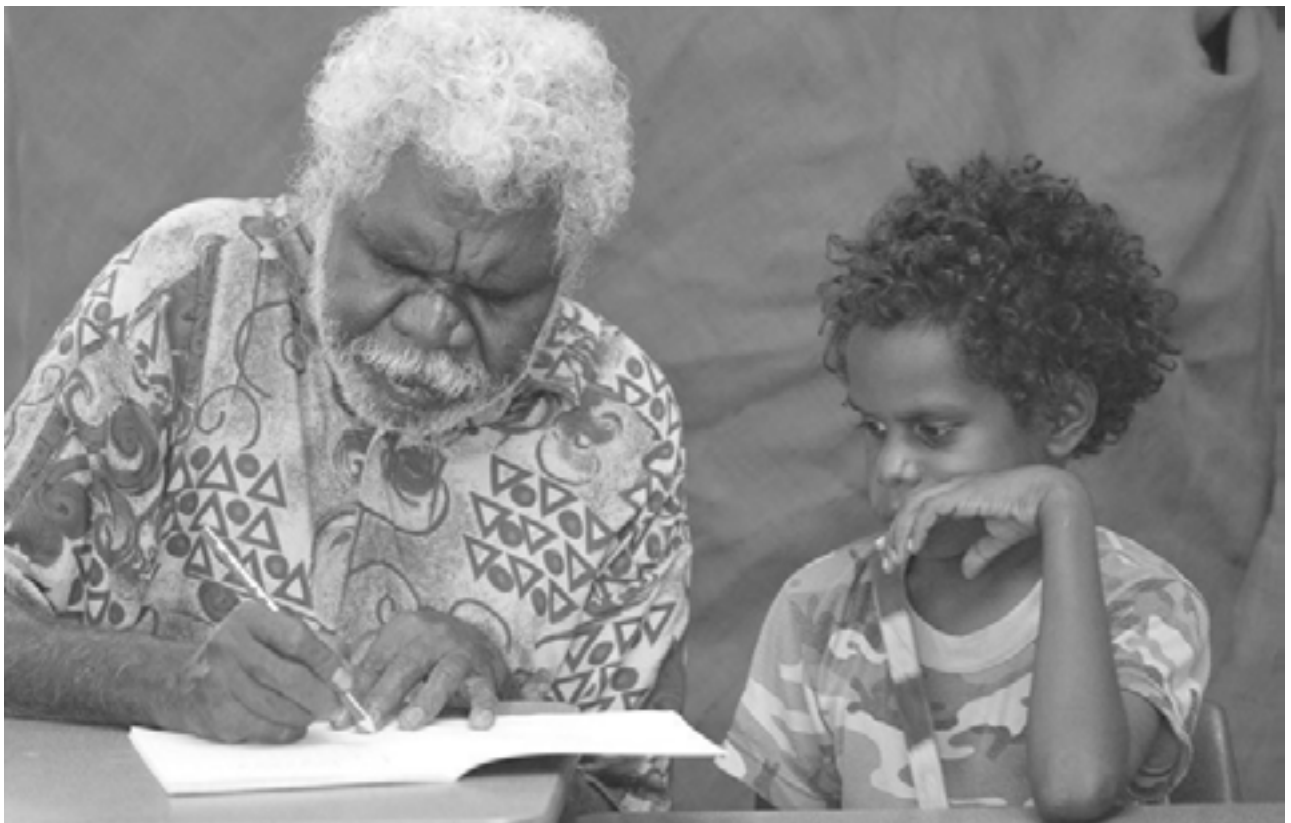
***Action – Establish a Cape York Education Leaders Forum***

From 2006 to 2008, the Queensland Government will support a regional representative forum of Cape York communities – the Cape York Education Leaders Forum. The Forum will bring together Cape York communities to plan, support, monitor and make recommendations to improve the education and training outcomes of Cape York students. It is a regional mechanism that will support increased Indigenous involvement, participation and collaboration with government in making decisions about education and training – both regionally and locally.

The Forum will:

- create a vision for education in Cape York
- identify common issues and strategies that will improve education and training outcomes for Cape York students
- monitor educational achievements at a regional level and review changes in educational achievement, and
- identify and recommend areas for practical action research and innovation.

The creation of the Forum represents the initial phase of a broader Queensland Government commitment to increase the capacity of Indigenous communities in Cape York to provide input into education issues and to move toward greater decision making over some of those issues.



#### Forum representation in the case of Coen

Coen is a community that has a school but does not have a local Aboriginal community council. In this case the community representative could be nominated through other recognised bodies established to serve the interests of the local Indigenous community.

The Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation is an incorporated body, with a board of directors among whom are Indigenous Elders from the Coen community, that is established principally to serve the interests of Coen's Indigenous community. A representative for the Forum could be drawn from the Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation.

Over the next three years, the Queensland Government will work with the Cape York Education Leaders Forum, to further develop and strengthen the status of educational governance arrangements and the role of individual communities and parents in schools across the region. With the growing capacity and engagement of the community there is opportunity for government to create a genuine partnership in the delivery and management of education services in Cape York.

Work will begin on setting up the Forum in 2006 and it is anticipated that the first meeting will take place in early 2007 where a Chair will be elected, the Forum Working Group will be established and work priorities and targets will be set. The Forum will then meet again in 2007 and twice in 2008.

Membership of the Forum will include an Indigenous community representative from each of the Cape York communities where there is a school. Generally, the local Aboriginal community council will determine the local community representative on the Forum. It could be the Mayor, a Council Chairperson, a designated Councillor with education portfolio responsibilities or a recognised community leader.

However, given the diversity of Cape York communities, there will be cases where these criteria may not produce a representative of the Indigenous community. Where this is the case, other arrangements will be devised through the Forum's Secretariat on a case-by-case basis (see Coen example left). This will ensure there is appropriate and adequate Indigenous community representation from every Cape York community and that the overall composition of the Forum is representative of the demographics of Cape York communities.

As a community-based forum, only community representatives on the Forum will hold voting rights. Community representatives on the Forum will be appointed until December 2008. The community representative will be a key player in the community in driving change in education outcomes for the community's children and young people.

The Departments of Education and the Arts (DEA) and Employment and Training (DET), Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership ('Cape York Institute'), state and non-state school representatives and representatives from the tertiary sector will participate in the Forum as non-voting, ex-officio observers. State school representatives will play a key role in providing advice and expertise on education and training issues. Both the Indigenous community and local state school representatives on the Forum will have a key role in reporting back to the community and working together to implement the recommendations and decisions of the Forum.

#### ***Action – Provide more opportunities for Cape York communities to inform and influence policy and program decisions***

The Forum can influence policy and program decisions in four key ways. First, through Forum meetings community representatives will have an opportunity to speak directly with state school representatives to provide input into regional and local level policies and programs on Indigenous education issues. Second, at the state level, the Cape York Education Leaders Forum will have representation on the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC), the peak advisory body on Indigenous education to the

state and federal Ministers for Education. Through the QIECC the Forum can provide advice to both the state and federal Ministers for Education on education and training issues in the Far North. Third, at the regional level, a representative from the Forum will also sit on the Far North Queensland Strategic Advisory Group (FNQSAG), a regional body overseeing educational programs in Far North Queensland. The FNQSAG is comprised of representatives of principals, parents, unions and DEA. Finally, at the local level there is an existing set of arrangements that the Forum representative can participate in, primarily through the negotiation table process.

In addition to these mechanisms, the Forum will have formal reporting relationships to government (state and federal) through arrangements negotiated and agreed to by the Forum and government. Reports will also be provided to Indigenous communities in Cape York.

Once established, the Forum will need to explore and identify opportunities to link with other government agencies, non-government organisations, advisory bodies and other Cape York regional and community-based groups such as the negotiation table and the Government Champion processes (see other examples right).

#### ***Action – Support the Cape York Education Leaders Forum***

To support the work of the Cape York Education Leaders Forum, a Working Group will be established.

The rationale for establishing the smaller Working Group is to allow the larger body, the Forum, the opportunity to discuss, explore and debate issues relevant to education in Cape York communities, while the smaller Working Group will progress those issues. In addition, the Working Group will scope the priority areas identified by the Forum; develop regional strategies; consult with other relevant stakeholders; and recommend research agendas to be pursued in collaboration with the Cape York Institute.

The Working Group will consist of:

- Forum Chair (also Chair of the Working Group)
- four community representatives elected from the Forum (in addition to the chair)



#### **Links with other bodies**

Apunipima Cape York Health Council

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation

Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP)

Cape York Strategy Unit (DATSIP)

Crèche and Kindergarten Association

Department of Communities

Department of Education, Science and Training

Department of Employment and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Far North Strategic Advisory Group

Indigenous Coordination Centres

Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee

Department of Child Safety

- the Far North Queensland Regional Executive Director (Education Queensland)
- the Executive Director (Schools) for the Torres Strait and Cape York district
- representatives from DET, DEST, non-state schooling sectors, tertiary sector and the Cape York Institute.

It will meet at least four times a year and operate collaboratively to support the work of the Forum.

In addition, the Queensland Government will contract the Cape York Institute to provide administrative and secretariat services to support the ongoing work of the Forum and the Working Group. For instance, this will include:

- assisting with initial setting up of the Forum
- coordinating research and consultation on major education and training issues decided by the Forum
- managing the budget and operational activities of the Forum and Working Group
- coordinating the communication of Forum activities and outcomes to the region, and
- organising meetings of the Forum and arranging travel and accommodation for all meetings.

The Far North Queensland (FNQ) Regional and Cape York district offices of the Department of Education and the Arts (DEA) will provide an important link between schools, government agencies and Cape York communities. The FNQ Regional Executive Director and Executive Director for Schools in Cape York will support the community engagement and governance arrangements. Together with school principals, they will provide leadership to drive educational improvement and clear points of accountability for Indigenous education in the Far North.

To support the establishment and ongoing operation of these governance arrangements and to support projects initiated by the Forum, the Queensland and Australian Governments will together provide \$200,000 per annum from 2006 to 2008.



## Cape York Education Leaders Forum — A Summary

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Purpose               | To collaboratively plan, support, monitor, oversee and make recommendations to improve the education and training outcomes of students in Cape York  |
| Forum membership      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprises Indigenous community representatives from each Cape York community where there is a school</li> <li>• Chair of the Forum to be elected by the Forum members</li> <li>• Representatives of State and Australian Government agencies, state and non-state schools, tertiary sector and the Cape York Institute will participate as non-voting, ex-officio observers</li> <li>• Indigenous community members on the Forum will hold voting rights</li> <li>• Members of the Forum appointed until December 2008</li> </ul>   |
| Frequency of meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2007 and 2008, the Forum will meet twice a year</li> </ul>   |
| Term                  | 3 years (2006–08) 2006 set-up of the Forum   |
| Forum support         | <p>Working Group –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose – to implement, manage and drive the recommendations and decisions of the Forum</li> <li>• To be chaired by the Chair of the Forum</li> <li>• Comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the Forum Chair (Chair)</li> <li>– Four community members elected from the larger representative Forum</li> <li>– FNQ Regional Executive Director, Education Queensland (EQ)</li> <li>– Executive Director (Schools), EQ</li> <li>– the Director of the Cape York Institute (or delegated representative)</li> <li>– representatives each from DET, DEST, non-state schooling sectors, and tertiary sector</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meets at least four times a year</li> </ul> <p>Secretariat –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose – to provide administrative and executive support to the Forum and Working Group</li> <li>• Services provided through the Cape York Institute</li> </ul> |
| Reporting             | The Forum will provide regular (quarterly) progress reports to the Queensland and Australian Governments and Indigenous communities in Cape York.  |
| Funding               | Queensland and Australian Governments together will provide \$200,000 per annum from 2006–08.  |





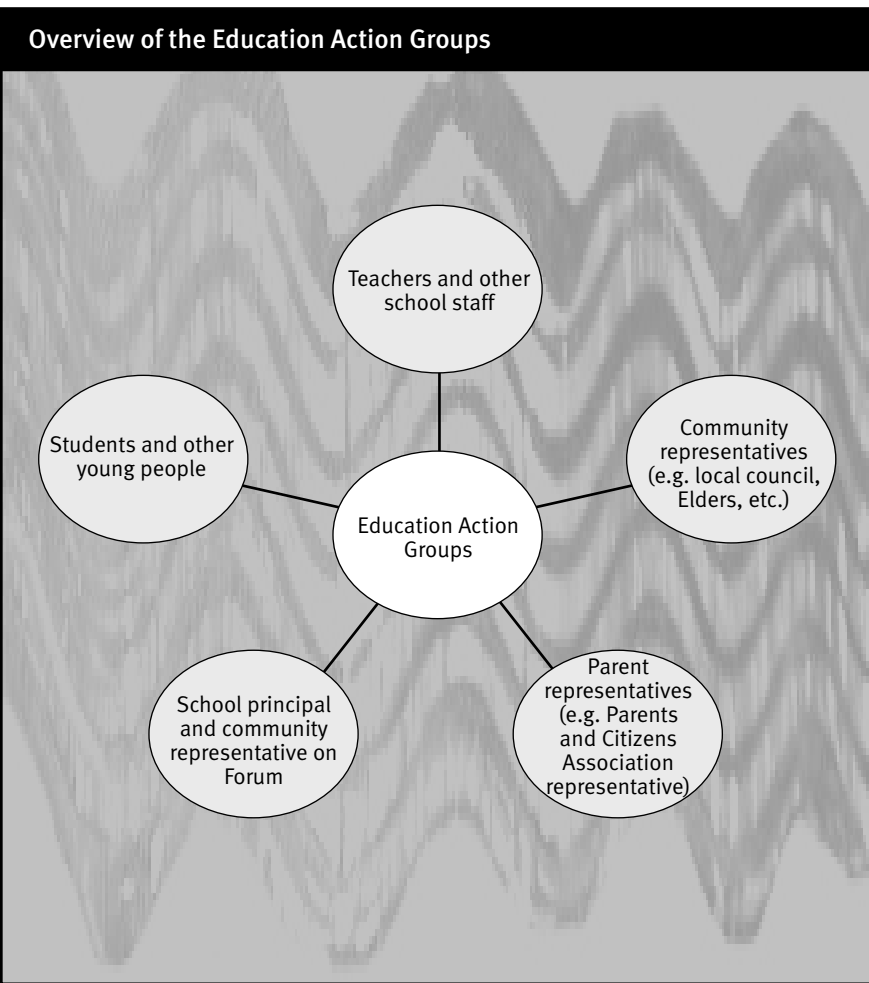
### Local engagement in education

The involvement of Indigenous parents, families and communities (in both voluntary and paid capacities) is acknowledged as one of the most important ways to improve Indigenous children’s academic achievement, attendance and continued education. It is also cited as an effective way to improve school performance. Successful family–community involvement can take many forms – including helping children at home, volunteering in the classroom, participating in decision making at the school and serving on school boards and committees.

**Action – Establish local community Education Action Groups to support the work of the Cape York Education Leaders Forum**

Action and engagement at the local level are necessary to ensure follow-through on actions decided at the Cape York Education Leaders Forum and to improve the outcomes of the local state school.

To support action and engagement at the local level, school principals and the local community representative on the Cape York Education Leaders Forum will form the nucleus of an Education Action Group. The Education Action Group could also involve the collaboration of teachers and other school staff, students, parents and other community members, who would bring their own perspectives, experiences and skills.



The Education Action Group will collaborate and develop strategies to:

- follow up and progress actions decided at the Cape York Education Leaders Forum where applicable
- ensure the local Forum representative and local school principal are prepared for Forum meetings, and
- ensure the wider community is kept informed of dialogue and developments from the Forum.

The local community Education Action Group is not intended to replicate what already exists. Where there is already a partnership approach that gives parents, families and community opportunities to participate and become involved, then these should be utilised to work together to support the work of the Forum.

***Action – Enable and strengthen school–family–community partnerships***

At the local level, many state schools in Cape York have already developed effective strategies for partnerships with their communities. Current evidence suggests that effective strategies for partnerships in Cape York differ from community to community, and the most appropriate strategies for a particular community will depend on local interests, needs and resources.

Education Queensland’s *Partners for Success* strategy aims to ensure successful outcomes for Indigenous students through partnerships between parents and local Indigenous communities and schools. Education Action Groups provide one possible partnership model to ensure that those issues that can be influenced and resolved at a local level are actively addressed.



## Western Cape College nurtures student success

Recent achievements by the Western Cape College can be attributed to a model based on senior leadership with a clear focus on accountability.

The College concept promotes uniform expectations on staff and student achievement and facilitates quality curriculum planning and the development of educational programs in a time effective and resource effective way.

Identified as a Centre of Excellence in Indigenous Education, Western Cape College has much to celebrate with a dramatic improvement in Indigenous and non-Indigenous student results occurring across the College's four campuses. The College has seen retention rates for Years 10, 11 and 12 students increase from 27 students in 2003 to 60 students in 2005. Some 71 percent of Indigenous students who completed Year 12 in 2004 are either in full-time employment or study.

The Western Cape College is also working with the local community to develop employment pathways for Indigenous students. In partnership with Comalco, the College has developed the Careers Education Program in Mining to assist secondary students identify the subjects and skills necessary for the mining industry. The students have the opportunity to undertake work experience at the mines and each year up to 15 Western Cape College students have been offered school-based traineeships and apprenticeships by Comalco.

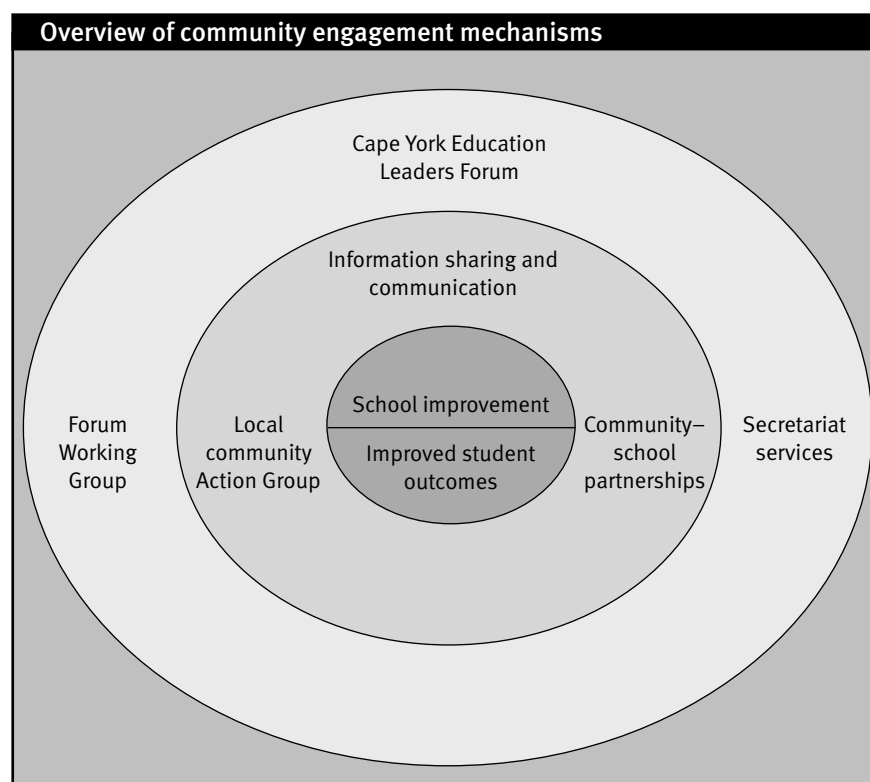
Once established, the Cape York school principal will work with the Education Action Group to facilitate, develop and strengthen family–community–school partnerships. This may include such activities as:

- identifying opportunities for parents or community volunteers to help teachers and other school staff to develop an awareness of families and the community in which the school is located
- identifying and developing goals for the family–community–school partnerships
- discussing early education services
- accommodating the aspirations of the community about how the local school can best serve the students
- discussing and planning for upcoming local events
- discussing recruitment strategies and
- planning excursions.

## Action – Improve information sharing and communication between schools and the community

Effective communication is an important part of school–family–community partnerships. If Cape York families and communities are to be involved as true partners in their children's education, it is important to provide ongoing opportunities to hear their concerns and comments as well as providing them with information about how the school is progressing.

Many Indigenous parents in Cape York come from a non-English-speaking background, have low literacy and numeracy skills and have had limited prior educational experiences. These issues impact on the way information is communicated and means that for many Indigenous parents and



communities in the Cape, the way information is communicated is as important as the information itself – if not more.

The Education Action Group will develop strategies to ensure that two-way communication occurs on a regular basis between school and home and between school and community. Building on broader reforms around school reporting that the Queensland Government announced in 2004, this strategy proposes to capitalise on these reporting mechanisms and to make them responsive to the needs of the local communities.

From 2007, the Queensland Government, through Education Queensland, will ensure that all Cape York parents and communities are informed about the educational performance of their schools. The principal in each school in conjunction with the Forum representative will meet face to face with the community to provide a twice-yearly report which will include:

- levels of enrolment and trends in enrolment
- school attendance levels
- literacy and numeracy achievement against state and national benchmarks
- secondary schooling outcomes, in particular Year 12 outcomes where applicable, and
- information and opportunities for students moving to finish school.

School principals in Cape York will provide an annual report to the local community council. Reports will respect students' privacy; reports will discuss the achievements of the whole group, not the achievements of individual students.



# 2

## Provision of high-quality education services

The Queensland Government is committed to providing the best possible education for all Queensland children so that they can reach their full potential. The provision of high-quality and responsive education services is crucial to the social and economic development of communities in Cape York.

The Queensland Government, through its state schools, is the major provider of education services in Cape York. Others responsible for the provision of education and training services and programs to Cape York communities include Catholic and Independent schools, Crèche and Kindergarten Association, non-government agencies, the Australian Government, as well as other Queensland Government agencies.

To improve the provision of high-quality and responsive education services in Cape York, the Queensland Government will continue to build high expectations among school leaders and teachers and adopt standards for student achievement that are comparable across every school in Queensland.

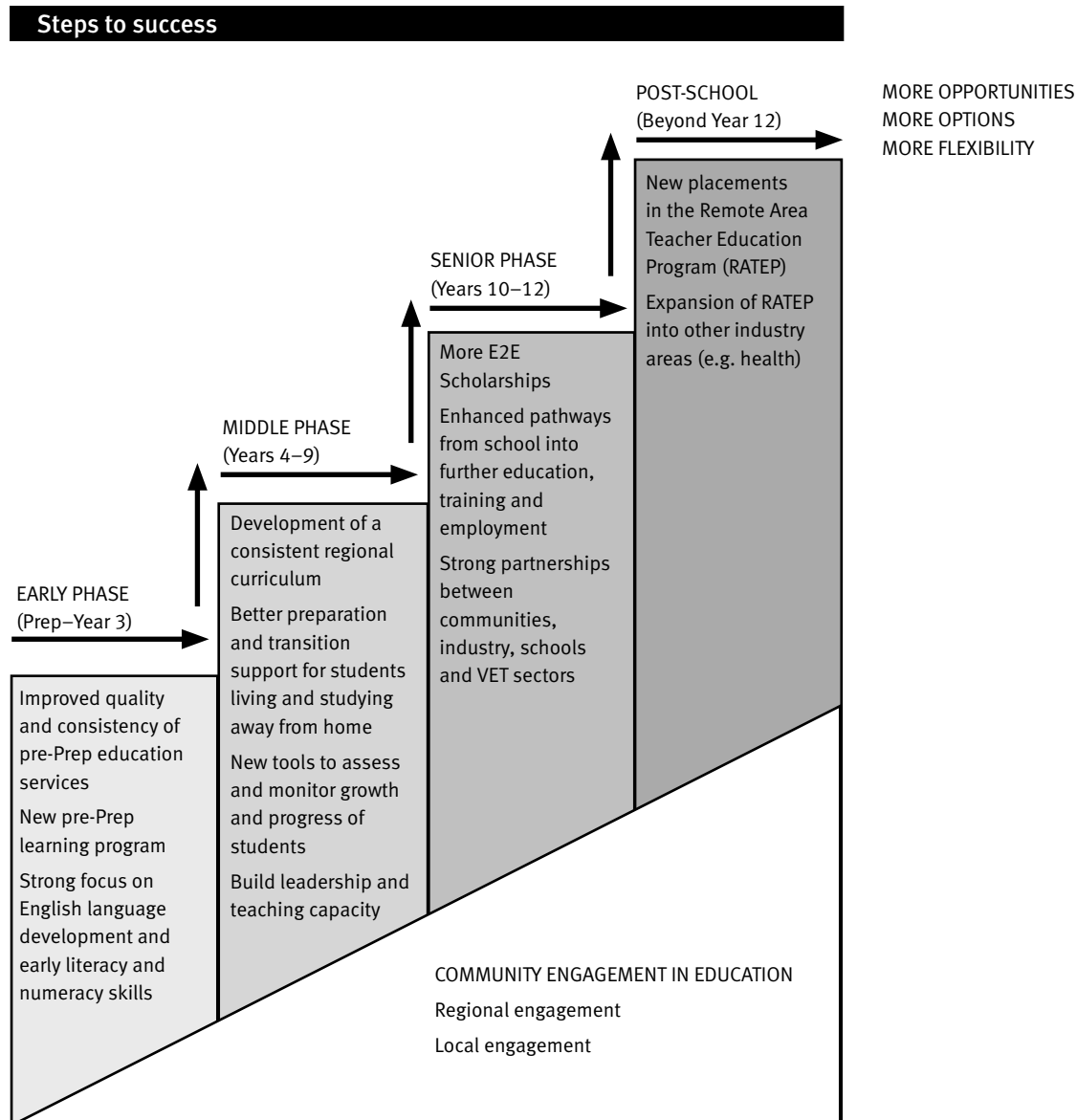
### Putting in place building blocks for better performing services

The *Education and Training Reforms for the Future* (ETRF) released in 2002 provides the blueprint to build a better education system from the ground up across the early, middle and senior phases of learning. Through these reforms, Queensland's education and training systems are being reshaped to cater for students' individual needs, equip them for the world of work and inspire academic achievement.

The early (Prep to Year 3), middle (Years 4 to 9) and senior (Years 10 to 12) phases of schooling represent different aspects of the learning process. Each phase is a building block to the next phase. This part of the strategy looks at six key elements designed to improve the quality of education services across each of the phases of schooling:

- 1 **Early engagement** – Build foundations for learning and prepare children for school
- 2 **Curriculum** – Build the continuity and consistency of learning programs so that the work done in primary school prepares students for high school, whether that is in the region or elsewhere
- 3 **Achievement** – Every student to achieve a level of literacy and numeracy that enables them to reach their full potential and achieve academic success
- 4 **Transition** – Improve preparation and support for students transitioning from primary to secondary schooling (Years 7 to 8) and from junior to senior secondary schooling (Years 10 to 11)
- 5 **Pathways** – Establish pathways from school to work that are worthwhile, relevant, viable and accessible
- 6 **Leadership and teaching** – Nurture and strengthen quality of school leadership and teachers

A range of initiatives has been developed within each key element. The implementation of these initiatives is intended to improve the attendance, participation, retention and achievement of Indigenous students from Cape York. It aims to ensure that as many students as possible complete Year 12 or its equivalent when more opportunities, greater flexibility and choice in post-schooling options become available.



These key elements and initiatives do not encompass all the components necessary to improve the quality of education services in Cape York. Rather, they focus on leverage points that will act as vehicles for change. The regional governance and community engagement arrangements (outlined in Section 1) give Cape York communities further opportunities to influence and shape the quality of educational services.

### Provision of high-quality consistent pre-Prep services in the Cape

Education Queensland currently provides pre-Prep early education services in five Cape York communities. These early education services are also provided through childcare services (C&K Association) in other Cape York communities.

#### Pre-Prep services in Cape York

- |                        |
|------------------------|
| 1. Aurukun (EQ)        |
| 2. Hopevale (C&K)      |
| 3. Kowanyama (EQ)      |
| 4. Lockhart River (EQ) |
| 5. Mapoon (EQ)         |
| 6. Napranum (C&K)      |
| 7. Pormpuraaw (EQ)     |
| 8. Wujal Wujal (C&K)   |

From 2006, the Queensland Government will provide \$23.1 million over four years to fund the improvement and expansion of pre-Prep services in the Far North. This includes \$9.2 million in capital funding to ensure that services are delivered in appropriate facilities.

The Government will also ensure a common education program with a strong focus on early literacy and numeracy development is delivered by all providers – one that provides students with the grounding for a successful entry into Prep and Year 1.

## Early engagement

### Action – Build foundations for learning and prepare children to start school

Children's learning experiences in the early years play a crucial role in setting the foundation for lifelong learning, developing a strong self-identity, developing future attitudes to schooling and preparing children to start school.

From 2007, a non-compulsory, full-time Prep Year of education before Year 1 will be available at every school. The play-based Prep curriculum will help children make a smoother transition to Year 1 and set the foundations for lifelong learning. Prep students will attend classes five full days a week to help develop their early language, social and behavioural skills in preparation for starting school.

While the availability of a Prep Year from 2007 will better prepare students for school, more is needed to support Indigenous students to develop their early English language skills. For many Indigenous children, English is a second or even third language, and for some, a language only used at school. Compared with non-Indigenous children, Indigenous children are much less likely to participate in formal early education services. Many have little or no experience with books prior to starting school.

In recognition of the early learning needs of many Indigenous students, pre-Prep early education services are presently provided in 30 Indigenous communities across Queensland, eight of which are in Cape York (see left). This early education service provision varies widely in terms of who delivers the service, what is delivered, where it is delivered and how it is delivered. For example, at some sites these services are offered through Education Queensland while at others through the C&K Association. Also some services are offered on a full-time basis, while others are sessional.

#### Initiatives:

- During 2006 the Queensland Government will work in partnership with the community, government agencies, and other service providers (such as the C&K Association) to improve the quality and consistency of pre-Prep education services in Cape York.
- The Queensland Government will provide \$23.1 million over four years from 2006–07 to fund the improvement and expansion of pre-Prep services in the Far North. This includes \$9.2 million in capital funding to ensure that services are delivered in appropriate facilities.
- A new pre-Prep learning program will be developed by teachers and education experts in 2006. This new learning program will be for use by all service providers and have a strong focus on language development in Standard Australian English (SAE) and early literacy and numeracy skills. It will provide students with the grounding for successful entry into Prep and Year 1.



## Curriculum

***Action – Build the continuity and consistency of learning programs so that the work done in primary school prepares students for high school, whether that is in the region or elsewhere***

Many students move with their families around the region, and many need to change schools to complete their high school education. In addition, a high number of teachers and principals are new to the area each year, or move between schools. The Rich Tasks approach has been adopted as a common curriculum framework in Cape York schools with significant success. To ensure the standards achieved by Cape York students are consistent with student achievement across the region and in other parts of the state there is a need to build even greater continuity and consistency. This will ensure that an 'A' in Kowanyama or Lockhart River will mean the same as an 'A' in Cairns.

Greater consistency across the curriculum will:

- enable curriculum planning and development to be approached in a consistent and coherent way
- create shared language among schools in the region and support professional conversations about curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting issues
- ensure teachers new to the region have clear direction about the learning program being used, what they need to teach, and access to a range of high-quality teaching and assessment tools
- ensure the work done in primary schools prepares students for high school, whether that is in the region or elsewhere, and
- facilitate the movement of students and staff across school sites.

### ***Initiatives:***

- To build even greater continuity and consistency in learning programs across state schools in Cape York, in 2006 the Queensland Government will introduce a consistent curriculum for the region that will span Prep to Year 10.
- The Queensland Government will appoint an expert curriculum team to work with schools in Cape York to develop a consistent regional curriculum spanning P–10. This new curriculum will be trialled in Cape York schools from Term 3 in 2006. The expert curriculum team will provide leadership and support in curriculum, teaching and assessment practices for state schools in the Far North.

### **Reforms to curriculum, assessment and reporting in Queensland schools**

In July 2005, the Queensland Government announced the development of the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework to improve the quality and consistency of schooling in Years 1–10, across all Queensland schools, state, Catholic and Independent.

The QCAR Framework means that all Queensland children will be taught the essentials, their achievements will be assessed against statewide standards, and parents will receive clearer report cards. By providing more focus on the essentials that must be taught, the new framework will also address concerns raised by parents and teachers about the large volume of work getting in the way of in-depth student learning. It will also guarantee that all students are taught what they need to know to succeed in life now and in the future.

## Achievement

**Action – Every student to achieve a level of literacy and numeracy that enables them to reach their full potential and achieve academic success**

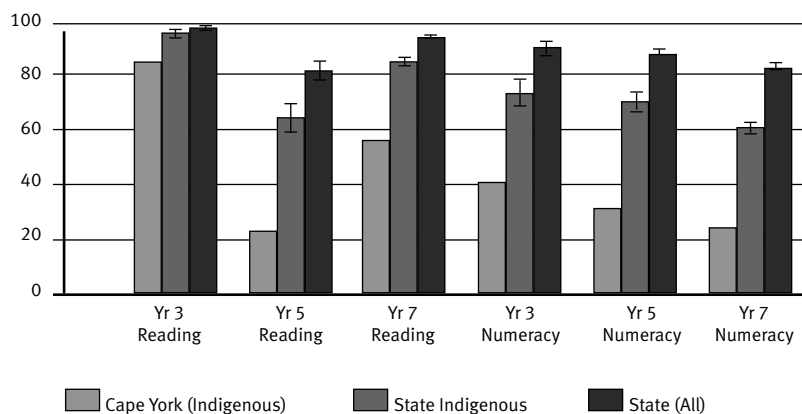
The capacity to read, write and communicate in Standard Australian English is the foundation for all learning. Indications of the educational achievements of Cape York Indigenous children, as measured by Year 3, 5 and 7 national benchmarks, indicate that as a group they perform at a lower level than non-Indigenous students (see graph opposite). The early identification of children with difficulties is crucial.

A range of programs is in place to support Queensland students to achieve their full potential and achieve academic success. Currently, every Queensland state school monitors and assesses all children's Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy development across Years 1 to 3 and provides support as appropriate. In addition, education support plans and individual learning plans are used to provide intervention and monitor more closely the development of literacy and numeracy skills of children diagnosed as at risk in Year 2, including children and young people in care, and students with disabilities.

### **Initiatives:**

- The Queensland Government will develop a set of assessment and monitoring tools for use in every state school in Cape York. These tools will support schools and teachers to monitor more closely the progress of students, particularly in relation to the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, identify children experiencing difficulties and deliver extra support and intervention where and when they are most needed. Trialled in selected schools during 2006 with implementation extending to all schools across Cape York from 2007, these tools will include:
  - A new **Diagnostic Tool** to assess the literacy and numeracy learning needs of all children at their point of entry to school, whether it is Prep or Year 1. Using observations of children and their work, teachers will assess students' capabilities in literacy and numeracy against standard criteria. The tool will enhance consistency of teacher judgments across schools and provide a starting-point for monitoring growth in students' literacy and numeracy skills.
  - An **Individual Learning Plan** developed for every student in Cape York completing Prep and/or starting Year 1, to be updated each year until the completion of Year 9. Individual Learning Plans will identify each child's strengths and areas of learning need with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy skills. The plans will be developed by teachers in collaboration with parents or guardians and informed by the findings of the new diagnostic tool.
  - A **Progress Map** developed to monitor growth in the literacy and numeracy skills of individual students as well as groups of students in Cape York as they move through school.
- Commencing in 2006, annual assessments of literacy and numeracy will be conducted to help provide accurate and regular information about students' learning needs. Student results will be included in the annual revision of each student's Individual Learning Plan.

**Percentage of students achieving national benchmark or better in Queensland state schools, 2004**



## Supporting student transitions

A Transition Support Officer (TSO) assisted a Year 10 female student with the move from her remote Aboriginal community in Cape York to a boarding school in a larger regional centre. At the time of the transition this female student was a regular non-attender at school and education was not a priority.

The TSO helped the student prepare for her move, settle into her new school, and keep in touch and connected with her family and community. On call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the TSO helped the student address the unique challenges that confronted her on a daily basis.

Now settled and more independent, the girl actively participates in class and is keen to further her education and opportunities. She returned to her community in her school holidays, and on her own accord she visited her local community school and spoke to the students about the benefits of furthering their education, the support that is available and most importantly the fun she was having.

This girl has become a role model for other Indigenous children in her community. The student's success can be attributed not only to her desire to learn but also her strong and trusting partnership with her TSO.

## Transition

**Action – Improve preparation and support for students transitioning from primary to secondary schooling (Years 7 to 8) and from junior to senior secondary schooling (Years 10 to 11)**

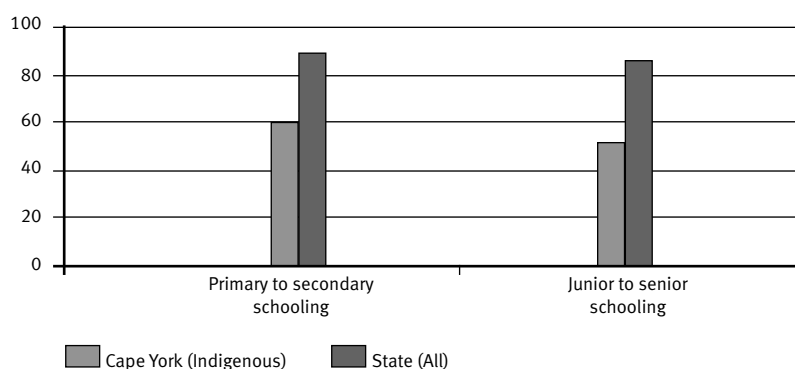
All children and young people must make a number of key education-related transitions. These include starting school, moving to high school, going on to senior and then on to further training, study or work. Successfully coping with these transitions is vital to students' success at school.

For Indigenous students in Cape York, rates of successful transition from primary to secondary schooling (Years 7 to 8) and from junior to senior schooling (Years 10 to 11) are notably lower than for Queensland students in general (see graph below). These transitions are complicated by the remoteness of their communities. This together with limits on student accommodation in the region means that many students need to move away from their family and local community to access high school. It is estimated that more than 240 Indigenous students from Cape York attend secondary schools in urban centres such as Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane, many of which are non-state schools.

Jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian Governments, the pilot Transition Support Service was introduced in 2005. The transition service comprises Community Support Officers based in Cape York communities and Transition Support Officers located in the main destinations where students from Cape York pursue their secondary education. Together these officers help students prepare for their move, settle into their new school, overcome practical challenges, stay in school and stay connected with their family and community, as well as form connections with local networks and mentors in their new setting.

If all students in Cape York are to have an opportunity to complete school, then education must include preparing them for the emotional and academic changes associated with leaving their home, community and school to complete secondary education in larger centres.

**Percentage of students in state schools making successful transitions across key points in their schooling (2005)**



### ***Initiatives:***

- From 2006, all schools in Cape York will actively prepare students for the social, emotional and academic changes associated with living and studying away from their family and community by:
  - integrating into their learning programs work units that help prepare students for transitions
  - recording and monitoring every student's intentions for further education and training beyond Year 7 and again from Year 10, and
  - establishing mechanisms and networks to support students and their families across key transitions.
- During 2006, the Queensland Government will work with the community, Australian Government, and Catholic, Independent and state schools to explore options for building support strategies around priority destinations of students from the Cape York region attending schools outside their home community.
- The Queensland Government will provide \$5.5 million in funding over the next four years from 2006–07 to support the development of strategies that assist those Indigenous students from the Far North who leave their home communities to complete their secondary schooling.
- In 2006, information-sharing protocols will be established in partnership with the community, Catholic, Independent and state schools, and Australian Government to monitor and support students progressing across key transition years and between state and non-state schools.
- During 2006, the Queensland Government will review the level of supply and demand for student boarding accommodation. This will consider the range, availability and extent of accommodation available both within and outside the Cape York region as well as the benefits for students. Based on the findings, the Queensland Government will work with the community to explore future options.



### Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP)

RATEP is a successful initiative that assists and supports Indigenous people from rural and remote areas in Queensland to become qualified teachers, without leaving their community. It involves a partnership between Education Queensland, James Cook University of North Queensland and TAFE.

Students undertake Certificate III, IV and Diploma of Education Studies at TAFE before continuing into the second year of a Bachelor of Education with James Cook University. The flexible program and local delivery allow students to undertake the training with minimal travel from their community. Over 100 students have already graduated from university, and over 160 have completed a Certificate IV or Diploma. RATEP has provided opportunities for Indigenous people to gain meaningful employment with real career opportunities in their home communities.

### Education To Employment ('E2E') Scholarship Scheme

The Queensland Government's E2E Scholarship Scheme is currently operating throughout the state and across several government agencies. The scheme is designed to inspire and enthuse Indigenous students about the range of post-school pathways available to them by providing:

- training and employment opportunities
- options for exploring different pathways for future employment and training, and
- financial support for school-related expenses in Year 10, 11 and 12.

Indigenous students in Queensland are supported to complete Year 12 and pursue post-secondary pathways. The Queensland Government currently supports over 240 students in the E2E Scholarship Scheme with 25 students supported through the Department of Education and the Arts.

## Pathways

### *Action – Establish pathways from school to work that are worthwhile, relevant, viable and accessible*

A key goal of the Government's *Education and Training Reforms for the Future* (ETRF) is for all young people to complete Year 12 or its equivalent and gain a meaningful qualification. From 2006, young people will be required to complete Year 10 and then undertake further learning for another two years to achieve a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification. This will give more options, opportunities and flexibility in terms of pathways for young people into further education, training and employment.

The traditional academic focus in Years 11 and 12 does not suit everyone, so integrating vocational education and training (VET) into the school curriculum is an important component of the reforms. The Government's goal for young Queenslanders undertaking VET pathways is to attain a qualification at Certificate III level or higher. However, it is recognised that for some students the attainment of Certificates I or II may be necessary steps on the path to achieving a meaningful senior qualification.

There is a need to establish pathways from school into post-school education, training and employment that are worthwhile, relevant, viable and accessible. These pathways are best constructed by Cape York communities in partnership with industry, schools and VET sectors. The Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education to Employment (E2E) Scholarship Scheme (see left) are examples of two initiatives that provide pathways for Indigenous young people to go on to further work and study.

Schools in Cape York are already raising expectations and opportunities for young people to complete a Senior Certificate or pursue Certificate III vocational qualifications. A local plan for action called a District Youth Achievement Plan is in place to coordinate programs and services at the local level, across state, Catholic and Independent schools, home schoolers, universities, vocational education and training providers, and other services to reduce duplication, use resources more efficiently and close gaps in services. From 2006 as part of the ETRF, every Queensland student in Year 10, including those in Cape York, will complete a Senior Education and Training plan. To help young people plan for their future, schools and parents will work closely with Year 10 students to map out their career and education goals and the learning options available to them in the senior phase of learning.

### ***Initiatives:***

- During 2006, the Queensland Government will explore new ways of increasing student access to higher levels of VET and industry-relevant programs for state school students in Cape York. The new expert curriculum team will provide extra support to help state schools access more VET resources and offer courses geared to the needs of the school and wider communities, including the provision of outreach programs in isolated communities.
- In 2006, the Queensland Government will provide additional funding to create 10 new placements in the RATEP for students from the Cape York region.
- In partnership with schools, potential students in the senior phase of schooling will be identified and encouraged to seek entry into tertiary institutions.
- The Queensland Government will investigate the expansion of RATEP into new and emerging industries across other government agencies to help build the workforce skills of Indigenous young people in the region.
- The Queensland Government will fund five, three-year scholarship places in 2006 for the E2E Scheme for Indigenous students from the Cape York region.





## Leadership and teaching

### *Action – Nurture and strengthen capacity of school leadership and teachers*

Strong leadership and quality teaching are critical components of high-quality responsive education services and key success factors in improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous children. The need for strong, proactive and informed leadership at the school level is essential to establish and maintain a culture of learning that is inclusive of Indigenous students and facilitates their engagement and successful participation.

School leaders play a critical role in encouraging their staff to examine their practice and bring about cultural change within schools. Quality teaching also has a significant impact on the educational outcomes of students and is important for the overall improvement of the school. Teachers need to be able to excite and engage students, respond to their distinctive and diverse needs, and use a range of teaching strategies. Central to this is the provision of quality learning and development opportunities for principals and teachers.

Programs currently provided to nurture and strengthen school leadership and teaching include the Centres of Excellence in Indigenous Education and High Achiever Principals Network. So far, 11 Queensland schools have been identified as Centres of Excellence in Indigenous Education, including Western Cape College (see above left). These centres showcase practices that enable them to meet or exceed educational targets for Indigenous students and encourage other schools to implement similar practices. Five principals from Far North Queensland are part of the High Achiever Principals Network, a group of experienced principals from across Queensland recognised for achieving improvements in attendance rates and educational outcomes for Indigenous students.



#### Queensland's Centres of Excellence in Indigenous Education

Cherbourg State School

Badu Island State School

Cunnamulla State School

Mitchell State School

Western Cape College

Cairns West State School

Durack State School

Thursday Island State High School

Yarrabah State School

Spinifex State College, Mount Isa

Redcliffe State High School

#### Alignment of support services – FNQ Indigenous Schooling Support Unit

Education Queensland will assist state schools to implement *Bound for Success* by improving the alignment between existing services.

A Far North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit has been established by combining the resources of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learning and Engagement Centre and the Indigenous Education and Training Alliance in Cairns.

The Unit is focused on supporting school leaders and teachers in state schools to deliver high-quality education services to Indigenous students in Far North Queensland schools.

The alignment of these support services will support better integration of educational services across the region, in particular:

- implementation of a consistent P–10 curriculum
- staff induction and professional development for all school staff
- integration of student support services, and
- implementation of *Partners for Success* and *Bound for Success*.

### ***Initiatives:***

- Commencing in 2006, all state school principals in Cape York will participate in a new leadership and development program. This program will support principals in their role as curriculum leaders with a particular focus on using literacy and numeracy data to drive school improvement. The program will also cover strategies for:
  - setting a learning and teaching vision for the school
  - setting school targets for learning in consultation with the school community
  - building a culture of high expectations for all students
  - strengthening connections across curriculum, assessment and reporting and
  - enhancing knowledge and skills in assessment.
- Centres of Excellence in Indigenous Education will showcase practices that enable them to meet or exceed educational targets for Indigenous students in order to encourage schools in the Cape York region to implement similar practices.
- Principals from the High Achiever Principals Network will act as mentors and work alongside school leaders in Cape York assisting them to:
  - address the key priority areas for their communities
  - foster leadership in Indigenous education
  - develop a culture of learning, quality and success through curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting, and
  - develop strategies to enhance engagement and partnership with Indigenous families and communities.
- A comprehensive professional development program will be developed in 2006, for rollout in 2007, to support the teaching and learning needs of the workforce in the Cape York region. It will focus on:
  - high-quality teaching and learning programs for literacy and numeracy
  - high-quality instructional methods and best practice for engaging young people in learning
  - techniques for assessing student achievement, and
  - using classroom data to inform teaching and learning programs.

# 3

## Ongoing action research for continuous improvement and reform

Successful education reform in Cape York is dependent upon acknowledging the unique challenges facing education in Cape York and finding effective ways to deal with these challenges. Ongoing, practical and outcomes-focused research is a critical component of this approach. It will assist in driving reform and change by ensuring that real and sustainable progress is being made in achieving improved educational outcomes for Cape York children and young people.

### Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership

The Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership is a policy organisation jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian Governments and affiliated with Griffith University. The Institute focuses on three mutually supporting elements: a think-tank function, policy and research and youth and leadership. Education reform, in particular the need to raise standards and expectations, is a key component of the Institute's agenda. Many of the issues the Institute is addressing are related to the challenges Cape York schools and communities face in improving education outcomes of students.

There is a need to establish strong linkages between the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, the Cape York Education Leaders Forum, and Cape York schools. This will ensure the reforms in education are connected to broader Cape York reforms, which target welfare passivity, social order and economic development. It will also ensure the work of the Forum, Cape York schools and the Institute are complementary.

To strengthen these linkages, the Queensland Government in negotiation with the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership has proposed that the Institute participate in both the Forum and Working Group and that the Forum Secretariat, as a work unit, reports administratively to the Institute. This strong affiliation with the Institute provides the Cape York Education Leaders Forum with more direct access to high-level government officials with capacity to harness resources so that government can deliver on its obligations. It also provides the Forum with access to a range of private enterprise and university sector expertise, including Macquarie Bank, Boston Consulting Group, Griffith University and University of Melbourne.

### **Action – Conduct ongoing, practical and outcomes-focused research**

This strategy supports the conduct of ongoing, practical and outcomes-focused research needed to inform both local and regional level reform in education.

This research will look into some of the key issues and challenges facing Cape York communities and schools in improving education outcomes for Indigenous children and young people. For example, research could be undertaken into the partnerships developed between Cape York schools and their communities – in terms of their nature, composition and level of success. This could be compared with high performing schools serving other

#### **Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership**

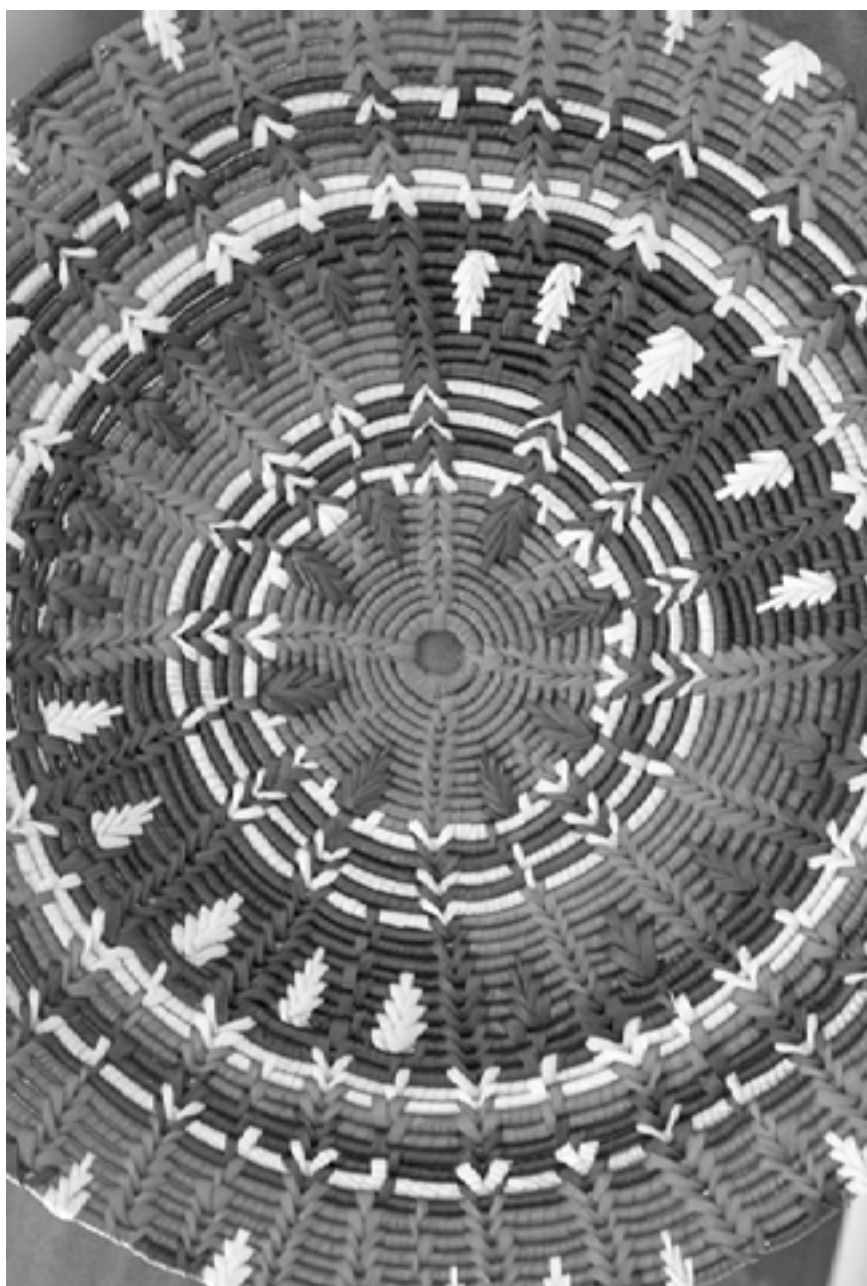
The Institute was launched in July 2004 and is based in Cairns. The Institute is a partnership of the people of Cape York, the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, and Griffith University. It is funded by a core grant from the Department of Education, Science, and Training and the Department of Education and the Arts, and supplemented with fee-for-research and private and corporate philanthropy.

The Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership is a unique organisation in that it strives to sit at the nexus of academia, community development, and advocacy. It is guided by the Cape York Agenda that has been articulated by Cape York leaders: *to enable the people of Cape York to have the capabilities to choose a life that they have reason to value*. To achieve that end goal, the Institute's work supports the economic and social development of Cape York. As a result, the Institute strives to be rigorous, driven, and yet practical in the work it undertakes.

disadvantaged communities to look at what conditions must be in place that facilitate effective school–community partnerships.

To ensure local involvement, sustainability and ownership of the outcomes, this research must be undertaken in partnership with Cape York communities, education sectors and government. The focus of the research will be collaboratively developed and steered by the Cape York Institute and the Forum Working Group, which is representative of the full range of stakeholders from both community and government.

The outcomes of this research will inform the next phase of the Government’s commitment to empowering communities and improving educational outcomes for children and young people in the Cape York region.



## The way forward

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The *Bound for Success: Education Strategy for Cape York* represents a strong commitment to improving the educational outcomes of children, students and young people in Cape York. It puts forward a three-part approach involving engaging the Cape York community, providing better education services and ongoing research to ensure real progress and continuous reform is achieved.

Fundamental to this strategy is the engagement of Cape York parents, families and communities in education. Cape York communities, families and parents have key roles and responsibilities in building high aspirations, promoting the value of education and demanding education services responsive to the needs and aspirations of students and their communities.

The drawing together of community representatives through the Cape York Education Leaders Forum will be the first milestone in the implementation of the strategy. The Forum is a key element in the implementation of this strategy – both regionally and locally. It will also play a key role in monitoring, overseeing and evaluating the implementation of this strategy. It is an interim step in a broader government commitment to develop, expand and strengthen the role of communities, in making decisions that affect their communities.

This strategy supports the development of strong linkages with other regional initiatives such as the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. The Institute will play a critical role in undertaking ongoing and practical research into critical issues needed to ensure continuous education reform in the region. The Queensland Government will work with the Institute to set up the Forum Secretariat, which will work with Cape York communities to help bring the Forum together early in 2007.

Some of the priority issues for immediate consideration at the first meeting of the Cape York Education Leaders Forum may include:

- electing a Chair
- setting the Forum's work priorities and targets
- establishing the Working Group, and
- negotiating and documenting reciprocal roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of government, communities and other stakeholders.

As the major provider of schools in the Cape, the Queensland Government will work to ensure state schools provide a service of the highest quality. The Queensland Government will also work in partnership with Cape York communities and others responsible for provision of education services to look at ways in which education services can be better delivered.