Our goal is to ensure that our schools provide an excellent education for all Aboriginal students by:

- being culturally capable, ready for children and able to engage purposefully with parents and the community
- achieving high levels of attendance and learning outcomes
- setting high expectations and
- managing transition points and pathways.

It serves to both guide decision-making and inform evaluation of progress.

This Statement, based on the six domains of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Education Action Plan 2010-14, seeks to identify priorities and strategies to improve educational outcomes for all Aboriginal students in the Diocesan School System.
An effective approach to Aboriginal education

Engagement and Connections

- Ensure involvement of Aboriginal people in decision-making processes with a view to building collaborative partnerships and fostering greater respect for Aboriginal perspectives.
- Promote deep and genuine understanding of Aboriginal spirituality and appropriate cultural protocols.
- Nurture strong relationships and genuine engagement between Aboriginal students, families, the Aboriginal Education team and classroom teachers. Such effective partnerships are characterised by trust, respect and shared responsibility for the education of Aboriginal students.
- Establish links and promote broader Aboriginal engagement with the Diocesan Parent Council.
- Support Reconciliation, the Church's commitment to social justice and cross-cultural awareness through active participation in parish activity and ministry.
- Engage with relevant Aboriginal organisations (such as Land Council and local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups) and community organisations (such as local Area Health and universities) to work toward positive outcomes for all Aboriginal students.

Attendance

- Support students and parents who identify as Aboriginal people, both within our school system and in the wider community.
- Gather, monitor and analyse attendance data to ensure high levels of participation in schooling.
- Work with schools to ensure culturally appropriate and inclusive practices and learning environments.
- Identify the educational and pastoral needs of Aboriginal students and their families and advocate on their behalf.
- Identify Aboriginal students who are at risk; in collaboration with families, teachers, school leaders the Aboriginal Education team and Education Officers, develop the ‘right’ interventions to meet these students’ needs.
- Implement all ten pathways of the Diocesan Pastoral Care for Wellbeing Framework.
- Develop Personlised Learning Plans for all Aboriginal students.

Readiness for School

- Recognise that Aboriginal students may speak Aboriginal English at home; respect this language background and explicitly support language development.
- Establish communication links between schools, pre-schools and Early Learning Centres to support successful transitions to school.
- Promote early learning as a positive influence on children’s development in order to increase numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children participating in quality early learning experiences.
- Ensure Aboriginal Education Workers are involved in transition to school processes.
- Collaborate with Broken Bay Early Learning Centres to deepen understanding and appreciation of local Aboriginal perspectives and culture.

An approach to education
Literacy and Numeracy

- Monitor literacy and numeracy achievements of Aboriginal students with reference to NAPLAN, Observation Survey, Best Start, MAI and PAT data to identify educational needs.
- Respond to this data by working with teachers to construct culturally sensitive interventions.
- Continue to develop a collaborative team approach between teachers and AEWs to support students’ literacy and numeracy achievements.
- Engage parents of Aboriginal students as active partners in supporting their children’s literacy and numeracy learning.
- Identify and promote culturally appropriate teaching and learning resources.

Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development

- Emphasise Student Centred leadership which fosters the achievement of valued learning outcomes for all students.
- Ensure all school leaders have a strong and accurate understanding of their students’ cultural and language backgrounds.
- Develop and facilitate professional learning for all staff to promote respect for and understanding of Aboriginal culture.
- Work with individual teachers and schools to identify the educational and cultural needs of Aboriginal students and develop programs that target these needs.
- Foster and generate opportunities for Aboriginal people to establish career pathways through education.

Pathways to real post school options

- Ensure students have access to current information about scholarships, bursaries and other opportunities that can provide access to quality education and career pathways.
- Establish partnerships with universities to promote successful transitions from school to further study.
- Network with relevant community groups to ensure effective support for successful transitions to further study and/or work.
- Facilitate a range of secondary outback pilgrimage experiences focused on leadership and cultural identity.
- Provide active support through careers counselling for Aboriginal students to develop knowledge and understanding of Vocational Education and Training, employment, career and higher educational pathways.
The Diocese of Broken Bay Aboriginal Education Statement is underpinned by the Catholic Worldview which emphasises that each human being is a unique person created in the image of God, with an inalienable dignity, always to be respected. Furthermore, our Catholic Worldview expresses the obligation to work toward social conditions in which the dignity of each person is respected and all human rights protected. The Aboriginal Education Statement reflects deep commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through education, and genuine respect for Aboriginal people and their spirituality, articulated by St John Paul II in 1986:

‘Your “Dreaming”, which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, is your only way of touching the mystery of God’s Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold onto it in your lives.’ (Alice Springs, 29 November 1986)

All Broken Bay students Indigenous & Non- Indigenous need access to contemporary Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum, opportunities for Aboriginal studies.

Through this Statement, we pay our respects to all Elders of the Dharug, Guringai, Darkinjung, Awabakal and Cadigal nations, past and present, for they hold the memories, traditions and culture history of this land, and to those of the future, for they hold the hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We pay our respect to all Aboriginal people who along with the Elders are the past, present and future of Aboriginal culture.

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