

Welcome

This month sees us into the first stage of implementing the Closing the Gap Education Strategy, with regions around Queensland developing their own plans to implement the strategy.

The Closing the Gap Education Strategy was developed over the past year in consultation with community members, schools and staff at all levels. The Strategy will guide our work over the next several years, though it is a living document and will be reviewed regularly.

In Indigenous Vocational Education and Training, a recent survey of TAFE students showed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were very satisfied with their TAFE experience. I congratulate the TAFEs on this positive endorsement.

In July, Terry Kearney retired as Assistant Director-General for Indigenous Education and Training Futures, the position I am now undertaking until an appointee is confirmed.

Terry was well known for his commitment to Indigenous education during his 35 years in the Department and led the development of the Closing the Gap Education Strategy.

I look forward to your continuing support.

Steve Armitage, A/Assistant Director-General

STATEWIDE NEWS

NAIDOC celebrations success

Teachers, students and education and training staff celebrated NAIDOC Week (July 5 to 12) in a variety of ways, including the Department of Education and Training's first statewide NAIDOC videoconference.

Education and Training Minister Geoff Wilson and Director-General Julie Grantham joined Elders, students, staff and families from Thursday Island,

Cairns, Townsville, Roma, Cherbourg and Brisbane for the videoconference on July 8.

Ms Grantham said the event was based around the NAIDOC Week theme, *Honouring our Elders, nurturing our youth*.

'We cannot overestimate the importance of family, of passing on knowledge from one generation to the next,' she said.

'We value and honour the skills and knowledge of the Elders and take very seriously the responsibility to nurture young Indigenous people.'

Indigenous Education Leadership Institute director Dr Chris Sarra said he was optimistic about the future of Indigenous education in Queensland.

'Working with Elders in schools is a tremendously important part of the process - helping teachers and other people in our workforce to better understand where Indigenous students are coming from so we can deliver on a stronger, smarter, more inclusive future for our Indigenous students,' Dr Sarra said.

Uncle Albert Holt said he was aware of many dedicated and devoted teachers who were working hard for the educational advancement of Indigenous children.

'In my personal discussions with numerous teachers and educators, it was evidenced that they were fully prepared to do anything in their power to help students beyond all barriers and boundaries,' he said.

To view the podcast of the event visit the [DET website](#).

New strategy aims to close the gap

The Department of Education and Training's (DET) Closing the Gap Education Strategy signals a new approach to education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Queensland state schools.

The document replaces the previous Partners for Success strategy, building on its priority areas of

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attendance, retention, attainment and workforce capacity.

Director-General Julie Grantham said the strategy had three key intermediate targets: to halve the gap in Year 3 reading and numeracy by 2012, to close the gap in attendance by 2013 and in Year 12 retention by 2013. The achievement of these intermediate targets will ensure Queensland meets its educational commitments under the Council of Australian Governments' agreement to 'Close the Gap'.

'The Closing the Gap Education Strategy delivers a targeted and decentralised approach to Indigenous education in Queensland and contains proactive interventions to improve teaching and learning outcomes,' Ms Grantham said.

'We have realigned the department to offer greater flexibility to schools and regions, moving from a centralised to a data-driven, place-based, case-managed approach.

'This will help schools maximise teaching and learning outcomes for Indigenous students by delivering programs suited to individual student and school needs.

'This strategy will help schools create an environment that expects success.'

Ms Grantham said the strategy would be implemented with funding from the department's existing budget.

'A new resourcing model will be adopted with previous Indigenous-specific funding to be combined into one grant to regions and schools,' she said.

Indigenous Education and Training Futures Division acting Assistant Director-General Steve Armitage said literacy, numeracy, language and parental engagement in the early years were the top priorities of the strategy.

'Schools will set their own targets based on the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students measured by classroom performance, including NAPLAN, A to E reporting and other assessment tools,' Mr Armitage said.

'Schools will consider students' language backgrounds, mobility and attendance, curriculum offerings and the views of parents and the local community.'

Indigenous Education Leadership Institute executive director Chris Sarra said the Government's new strategy represented 'a seismic shift'.

'What I really like about it, is that it is anchored by a sense of belief that we can actually make the difference required,' Mr Sarra said in Brisbane's *The Courier Mail*.

'It signals the end of low expectations for Indigenous students in Queensland schools in a way that puts every educator in Queensland schools on notice.'

Mr Armitage said an important function of the strategy was identifying successful local programs and initiatives that could be mirrored in other schools and regions.

Indigenous Schooling Support Units in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Nambour and Inala will support regions and schools to implement the strategy.

The outcomes achieved from the strategy will be reported annually.

To download a copy of the *Closing the Gap Education Strategy*, visit the [DET website](#).

Queensland Training Awards finalists

Hairdressing, horse racing, aeroskills and administration are among the industries to be represented at the 48th Queensland Training Awards state finals next month.

Baker Darrell Geary from Yarrabah is a finalist for Queensland's best apprentice after winning the North Queensland award from more than 100 entrants.

Mr Geary is taking a Certificate III in Food Processing at Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and works for Bama Ngappi Ngappi Aboriginal Corporation.

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The Queensland Government's longest-running and most prestigious vocational awards attracted more than 600 statewide nominations, which have been narrowed down to 48 finalists.

The Queensland Training Awards recognise the importance of skills training and the wide-ranging benefits for individuals and communities.

State winners can go on to compete for cash prizes at the Australian Training Awards in Canberra on November 19, 2009.

Finalists for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year:

- Nigel Beer, Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, Certificate III in Plumbing; Employer: Mark Maunder Plumbing
- Michaela Graaf, Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, Certificate II in Business; Employer: South Burnett Lawyers
- Rhona James-French, training provider: Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Diploma of Government; Employer: Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Rhonda Perry, Training provider: Queensland Police Service, Certificate III in Public Safety (Police Liaison); Employer: Queensland Police Service
- Justin Power, Training provider: Axiom College, Certificate IV in Business (Business Development); Employer: South East Queensland Indigenous Chamber of Commerce
- Vincent Schrieber, Training provider: Simmonds & Bristow, Certificate II in Water Industry Operations

For more information visit www.qta.qld.gov.au.

Our Women, Our State Awards open

The Our Women, Our State Awards will recognise the achievements of Queensland girls and women in building brighter futures for other females in Queensland's science, engineering and technology industries.

In celebration of Queensland's 150th birthday, the awards also include a special Great Queensland

Woman Award, which will recognise the significant efforts of one outstanding Queensland woman in achieving progress for women in our state.

Nominations close on September 11. Award winners receive \$3000, a trophy and a certificate.

For more information visit:

<http://www.women.qld.gov.au/>

Lighthouse Grants benefit collaborators

Ten ventures have received grants of up to \$25,000 in the second round of Indigenous Lighthouse Grants that encourage collaborations across the education, training and arts sectors.

Grant recipients were:

- Maroon State High School, to develop a mural in conjunction with other cluster schools and local Indigenous groups
- Longreach State High School for Walking in Our Shoes, where students from four different Aboriginal nations will share their journey to cultural sites with Elders
- Queensland Music Festival for a program introducing students to music industry opportunities
- Bunyabilla art and culture workshops where Pine Rivers area students will learn from Indigenous community members.
- Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE to establish a hub for local Indigenous artists to access materials, training, infrastructure and mentoring
- Cherbourg State School, for Books, Books, Books, where students will develop new book themes and illustrations, working with Elders, community members and artists
- Torquay State School for Little Sistas, Little Brothers Kids Klub, to create a performing arts groups to showcase and promote Indigenous culture
- Our Lady Help of Christians School, Cairns, for Sharing Our Stories through Dance, which involves Indigenous leaders and dancers



- Dalby State High School, for Honouring Culture – Pathways to Success with an art walk and bush tucker area
- Mornington Island State School for Writing for our people, our future, to create a series of books and a web.

For more information visit:

<http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous/lighthouse>

Students research life in the lab

Fourteen Indigenous senior secondary students gained hands-on laboratory experience at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) as part of a week of science placements and workshops at Queensland's major science and medical institutions in Brisbane in July.

QIMR's *Spotlighting Careers in Science and Indigenous Health* encourages students to undertake further training and education which may lead to a career in research with an Indigenous health focus.

Since 2002, 69 students and 12 teachers have participated in the program, which is set to expand along with QIMR's research into Indigenous health thanks to a recent \$27.5 million donation by American philanthropist Chuck Feeney.

Mareeba State High School community educator Elma Lingard said the program gave this year's students from Harristown, Gympie, Bundaberg, Mareeba, Innisfail and North Bundaberg State High Schools a unique opportunity.

'This is a great experience for the students – they have the chance to engage with professionals in the field, see up close what goes on in the lab and hopefully it will inspire them to further science studies,' Mrs Lingard said.

Mareeba State High School students Dallas Walker and Hannah Gutchen did 'real lab work' at the QIMR lab at Herston.

'We were able to see real experiments like flushing and separating animal bone marrow to excise the cells for further research,' Hannah said.

'This program could help my future career choices because it showed the many opportunities available in the fields of health and science – I'm interested in sports science in particular.'

Other students were considering careers in midwifery, paediatrics and veterinary sciences.

The students also visited the University of Queensland, Southbank Institute of Technology, the Science Centre and CSIRO Indooroopilly education centre.

For more information visit:

<http://www.qimr.edu.au/school/spotlight.html>

REGIONAL NEWS

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair success

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair's success exceeded the organisers' wildest expectations with 9,985 people passing through the gates.

Indigenous artists from across Queensland presented their work at the inaugural Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) on August 21 – 23.

The three-day cultural extravaganza was the first time art centres from Far North Queensland and the Cape and art dealers from around Australia came together to sell and showcase work.

CIAF is a key component of the Queensland Government's \$10.75M Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) program.

Described by Director Michael Snelling as a 'boutique' event, the art fair gave new opportunities for Indigenous artists and bridged the gap between art production and art sales.

CIAF featured work by some of Queensland's most influential Indigenous artists including Sally Gabori, Alick Tipoti, Rosella Namok and Arone Meeks.

While the primary focus is on the visual arts, the program encompassed theatrical performance, music, dance, storytelling and workshops.

To find out more visit www.ciaf.com.au

Atherton signs record 100 SAT students

Atherton State High School has signed more than 100 students to a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SAT), a record for the school.

The school invests in training pathways to achieve the Far North Queensland Region Service Commitment: all students will achieve an Overall Position and enter university, complete a training pathway to employment or enter the workforce.

Atherton State High School principal Tony Whybird said the 100-mark was significant.

'In 2002 we had 14 students signed onto school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and this year have 103,' Mr Whybird said. 'Our SAT pathways are across a range of areas including aviation, hospitality, engineering, carpentry, floristry and pharmacy.'

'We have a high level of engagement from the students and parents because we match training to career outcomes - it is about what the student wants to achieve and we make that happen in partnership with employers.'

Atherton student and aviation trainee Jake McDonald, the youngest person in the state to achieve a Certificate II in Aeronautical Engineering, is a finalist in the Queensland Training Awards.

Jake said the traineeship had placed him on the right path for his career aspirations.

'I want to be a fighter pilot. I had the opportunity to complete my two-year traineeship on a Warbird Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk - I don't know of anyone getting that opportunity,' he said.

'I almost left Atherton to follow my dream of becoming a pilot, but you don't have to leave the bush anymore to access training, the school brought the training to me.'

For more information about school-based visit:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/placement/vet/html/apprent.html>

Innisfail celebrates local culture

Innisfail State School has worked with Ma:Mu Elders to prepare for an exhibition of the culture and history of the region's traditional owners at the Johnstone Shire Hall on September 15-17.

The project consists of a 10-week Indigenous Art and Dance program leading up to a three day public exhibition at the Innisfail Shire Hall from September 15-17.

'More than 100 Ma:Mu children identified from over 11 schools will participate in the program which will also feature Ma:Mu Elders,' exhibition co-ordinator Kerry Macgillivray said.

Some 2000 Prep, primary and secondary students from Cardwell to Mc Donnell Creek and the Tableland are expected to visit the exhibition.

It will culminate in a closing celebration attended by indigenous leaders and special guests.

The project received support from the Queensland Government, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Arts Queensland, the Ma:Mu Aboriginal Corporation and the Mandubarra Elders.

Historic artefacts have been loaned from the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, private homes and the local museum and exhibits will be labelled in the Ma:Mu language, and Elders as custodians will be present to discuss them.

For more information visit:
<http://preview.curtispitt.com.au/2009/08/10/mamu-cultural-and-heritage-exhibition/>

NATIONAL NEWS

Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage

The fourth *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report released in July revealed 'unacceptable disparities in outcomes for Indigenous and other Australians', according to Gary Banks, who chairs the inter-governmental Steering Committee responsible for the report.

'This edition of the report embraces COAG's six closing the gap targets,' Mr Banks said.

Mr Banks said the report had been purposefully designed — following consultations with governments and Indigenous people around the

country — to focus on areas that really matter in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

'For example, educational outcomes for Indigenous children depend not only on the effectiveness of available schooling services, but also on students' health, and, importantly, the circumstances of their homes and communities,' Mr Banks said.

Commissioned by the Council of Australian Governments, the report's strategic framework is designed to track the extent to which government policies and programs are making a difference to Indigenous people where it counts.

Among the 'Things that work', the report listed Queensland's pre-Prep in discrete Indigenous communities, which it says 'provides high quality, consistent early childhood education programs' and North Queensland Indigenous Schooling Support Unit's development of early hearing assessment tools for staff and parents.

The report found that over the period reviewed, Indigenous people continued to share in Australia's general prosperity, with increases in employment, incomes and home ownership.

Mr Banks said 'these further improvements in economic indicators are a positive sign. However, preserving the gains in more difficult economic times will be challenging'. He added 'a number of the key social indicators have shown little improvement, with a deterioration occurring in areas such as criminal justice'.

The report is a product of the Review of Government Service Provision. It is overseen by a Steering Committee comprising senior officials from the Australian, State and Territory governments and supported by a secretariat from the Productivity Commission.

Education and training have been made a strategic area in their own right in this edition of the report, to align the framework with COAG's 'building blocks'.

'This reflects the widely acknowledged importance of education to overcoming many aspects of disadvantage,' Mr Banks said.

'Attendance at school is fundamental to better outcomes. For many years, it has been observed that rates of enrolment and attendance at school have been low for Indigenous children.

'But there have been no nationally consistent data available to verify or monitor this. So it is a step forward that this year's report has been able to include attendance data for the first time.

'These data confirm that attendance rates for Indigenous students are indeed lower than for other students, with the differences widening at high-level years. The differences, while significant — particularly in those jurisdictions with more remote communities — are not as great as some had anticipated.

'However, the data only relate to students who are enrolled; other data indicate that a larger proportion of Indigenous children are not even enrolled in school.'

For more information visit:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/indigenous/keyindicators2009/media-release>

ABS Indigenous resource now on-line

Indigenous Statistics for Schools (ISS) - a new resource from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Education Services team - is now available from the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au/education.

The web pages provide easy to use data for students and teachers on Indigenous population, education, health, housing, work and more. Links to the original on-line data sources are also provided for those who want more information.

The ISS web pages also cover general issues such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification (including the history of the Census questions on ethnicity), how Indigenous statistics are collected and the importance of accurate Indigenous statistics.

This free resource is available from the education pages of the ABS website:

www.abs.gov.au/students or www.abs.gov.au/teachers.

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New Indigenous Business Australia chair

Dawn Casey PSM FAHA has been appointed Chair of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), replacing Bob Blair, who acted in the position since 2008.

Dr Casey is Director of Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, was CEO of the Western Australian Museum and gained international recognition for her ground-breaking work at the National Museum of Australia.

Throughout her career, she has worked tirelessly for Indigenous people.

Dr Casey was instrumental in the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and helped initiate the joint Commonwealth and State response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

IBA creates opportunities for Indigenous people and communities through investments in employment and wealth creation. It assists small businesses, provides home loans, invests with Indigenous partners in commercial opportunities and provides services to support remote Indigenous communities.

For more information visit: www.iba.gov.au

Committee to review remains repatriation

The Australian Government has called for museums and private collectors worldwide to work with the Government to return Indigenous remains.

Speaking at the International Conference on the Inclusive Museum in Brisbane in July, Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin said the Government was overhauling the processes for the repatriation of Australian remains from international institutions to make them more inclusive of Indigenous aspirations.

To help with this review, a new International Repatriation Advisory Committee will be appointed in September to advise the Government on issues including reviewing current international repatriation policy and finding a more

effective way to deliver on international repatriation.

Over more than 160 years - from 1788 to 1948 or later - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remains were collected, usually without consent, by explorers, travellers and scientists and shipped off to museums and private collections in Australia and across the world.

In the past 18 months, more than 80 remains from five institutions in four countries were repatriated, including the recent return of three Indigenous Australians from the University of Oxford, UK.

About 1000 Indigenous Australian ancestral remains continue to be held in museums around the world, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France and the United States of America.

For more information visit the [FaHCSIA website](http://FaHCSIA).

IN BRIEF

Former Origin Greats (FOGS) Indigenous Employment and Career Expos

September 9 – Mount Isa Civic Centre

October 7 – Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

Indigenous job seekers and students have the opportunity to connect with prominent employers and education and training organisations and meet former rugby league State of Origin stars.

For more information visit: www.fogs.com.au or tel. 07 3331 5715 or email: admin@fogs.com.au

Brisbane hosts cultural performances

Tuesdays to November 17

A free program of Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural performances is presented every Tuesday in Brisbane's Queen Street Mall until November 17. Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dance Troupe and Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Troupe are just two of the many groups that will be showcased.

For more information visit:

www.ourbrisbane.com/whats-on/freebies/2555342.queen-street-mall-traditional-dance-program

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Dare to Lead conferences

September 11, Rydges, Melbourne

What a difference a good start makes! –

Indigenous early childhood

October 23, Adelaide

Identifying and catering for the gifts and talents of
Indigenous students

For details and registration forms visit:

http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&p=RA_National

QIECC Annual Forum

October 14-15

Leichardt Hotel, Rockhampton

For more information contact the QIECC

Secretariat at Toll Free: 1800 263 836 or Email:

qiecc@deta.qld.gov.au or visit

www.qiecc.eq.edu.au

We welcome your contributions

This newsletter is published by the Division of Indigenous Education and Training Futures in the Department of Education and Training. Please send contributions to the [editor](mailto:carmel.carrick@deta.qld.gov.au): carmel.carrick@deta.qld.gov.au or visit www.deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous