

Many Voices

QUEENSLAND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LANGUAGES POLICY ACTION PLAN

2020–2022



Queensland
Government

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Queensland Government is committed to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to reconcile the past and achieve a reframed relationship. In July 2019, the Premier signed the historic joint Statement of Commitment as part of the *Tracks to Treaty – Reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders* initiative.

To build on this significant step forward in the reconciliation journey and to foster a shared pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, on 2 September 2020, the Premier launched the *Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy* (the Languages Policy).

The Queensland Government worked in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language experts to co-design and develop the Languages Policy. This delivered on the action in the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021* for a co-designed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages policy with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Languages Policy outlines the Queensland Government commitment to:

- recognising the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in maintaining cultural identities and building the resilience of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- working in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop measures to strengthen and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- promoting Queensland as a thriving, vibrant cultural state that values and embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages as important to everyone.

About the Action Plan

The *Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Action Plan* (the Action Plan) has been developed to support the implementation of the Languages Policy. It outlines actions that build on existing initiatives underway across government, encourages whole-of-government support and embeds respect and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in the everyday business of Queensland Government.

The Action Plan aligns with the United Nations *International Decade for Indigenous Languages 2022–2032* which commits to drawing attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalise and promote Indigenous languages.

The Action Plan, and all subsequent plans, will be underpinned by the guiding principles of self-determination, recognition of diversity, truth telling and healing, and urgency and action. Achievements of this first Action Plan in 2020–2022 will provide the baseline for future Action Plans. Subsequent action plans will cover two-yearly periods and incorporate targets and milestones informed by this baseline, for meaningful monitoring and delivery of outcomes.

It outlines key areas for government action across four priority areas (outlined on page 3) to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Queensland are strong, acknowledged, maintained and accessible.

Closing the Gap

Importantly, the *Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Action Plan* will contribute to the Queensland Government’s commitment to the four priority reform areas in the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap and to ‘target 16’ which commits to a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages being spoken by 2031.

This will be achieved through the delivery of initiatives that will help preserve, grow and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary languages in Queensland. Culture and language play a critical role in the healing and strengthening of individuals and communities. Research demonstrates that cultural participation, including language use, supports improved life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including:

- early childhood development by promoting resilience, and by supporting engagement in early childhood services and education
- schooling by supporting self-esteem, attendance and academic performance through improved literacy and numeracy skills
- health by promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing
- economic participation through employment
- safe communities through developing stronger cultural identity and increasing resilience as protective factors against critical issues such as suicide and racism
- culturally legitimate governance and leadership.

Implementation of the Languages Policy and Action Plan including its progress in achieving ‘target 16’ of the National Agreement will be monitored by the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, guided by the Closing the Gap Partnership Committee.

The Languages Policy sets four priorities for government action on Indigenous languages and embeds the vision that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Queensland are strong, acknowledged, maintained and accessible to all Queenslanders.

CLICK ON AN ICON BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION

Pathways

Strategies aimed at developing physical, cultural and social infrastructure that provides strong foundations to support language growth and maintenance.



01



02



03



04

ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES

Action + activation

Development of language resources and expertise to grow community capacity to share and encourage the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages across all Queensland communities.

Restoration + transmission

Increase the number of people speaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages regularly including information storage, expertise and local access to learning.

Recognition + promotion

Strategies to grow community awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages to encourage reconciliation and pride in Queensland's unique cultural heritage.

PRIORITY 01: PATHWAYS



Pathways is about building the physical, cultural and social infrastructure foundations to support the growth and maintenance of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in Queensland.

Building a solid foundation of support will enable future actions under the Action Plan to be progressed in future iterations of the Action Plan.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
1.1 Investigate the creation of training packages to support the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school-based language educators	DoE
1.2 Pilot the delivery of certificate courses and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school-based language educators	DoE
1.3 Engage with local community groups to promote certification opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are First Nations Language experts	DESBT DSDSATSIP
1.4 Development of Family Led Decision-Making to increase the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in the youth justice system with the following Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations: Kurbingui, Wuchopperan, Goolburri and ATSICHS	DCYJMA
1.5 Support communities through the Stronger Places, Stronger People collective impact initiatives in Logan, Gladstone and Rockhampton to continue to address local issues, including cultural issues and cultural identity	DCHDE
1.6 Continue to create economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists through cultural expression such as the promotion of traditional language and story sharing through the Backing Indigenous Regional Art initiative	DCHDE (AQ)
1.7 Continue ongoing management of state-wide whole-of-government language services Standing Offer Arrangement including interpreting and translation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages	QH
1.8 Initiate, develop and establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language maintenance and revival through a range of activities across Queensland, through the Indigenous Languages Grants Program	DSDSATIP DoE

[CLICK TO VIEW ANOTHER PRIORITY](#)



PRIORITY 02: ACTION + ACTIVATION



Action and activation focusses on sharing and encouraging the development of language expertise and resources to grow capacity.

Nurturing relationships, developing skills, building capacity, and influencing people, agencies, and organisations, to encourage the ongoing development and increased use of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages over time.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1 Continue the employment and contracting of accredited Magistrate Court interpreters, such as the Wik Mungkan interpreters at the Aurukun Magistrates Court	DJAG
2.2 Continue to provide funding to the Aurukun Community Indigenous Corporation as part of the Aurukun Restorative Justice Program to Thaa' Pant to deliver peacekeeping and meditation services, including meditations conducted in Wik Mungkan language	DJAG
2.3 Increase the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages in and across all aspects of cultural tourism	DTIS
2.4 Support the Murridhagun Cultural Centre to provide cultural support, including language speakers, and advice to Queensland Corrective Services staff to support the relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners have with their cultural identity	QCS
2.5 Implement the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages in Queensland State Schools	DoE
2.6 Optimise the translation of Bushfire Awareness and Preparedness materials into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages state-wide	QFES

[CLICK TO VIEW ANOTHER PRIORITY](#)



PRIORITY 03: RESTORATION + TRANSMISSION



Restoration and transmission will focus on strategies that encourage an increase in the number of people regularly speaking Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages including information storage, expertise and access to learning.

The outcome of this priority is to see an increased number of peoples speaking, sharing and storing Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, resulting in an easier transmission of languages in future.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1 Explore the viability of small grant funding for artists to provide community-based art activities that promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages	DCHDE (AQ) DSDSATSIP
3.2 Provide community access to the recording facilities at the Bulmba-ja Arts Centre (Cairns) to preserve, maintain and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages	DCHDE (AQ)
3.3 Embed active efforts to implement and give full effect to all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle across the five system elements of the family support system (legislation, policy, programs, processes and practice). In particular, the Connection principle reinforces a child's right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly when the child is in the care of a person who is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person	DCYJMA
3.4 Provide tools and professional development to public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres so they can support communities to record and document languages	DCHDE(SLQ)
3.5 Support Queensland state schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to work together to increase the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language through use in the classroom	DoE
3.6 Provide guidance on the Copyright and Intellectual Property rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language speakers to protect the cultural property created during the development of teaching materials in schools	DoE

[CLICK TO VIEW ANOTHER PRIORITY](#)



PRIORITY 04: RECOGNITION + PROMOTION



Recognition and promotion seeks to increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages at a wider community level.

This will encourage reconciliation and pride in Queensland's unique cultural heritage and embed Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages as an integral part of Queensland's future growth and development.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1 Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enable them to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language is a language or dialect other than English	DoE
4.2 Explore strategies for the recognition and promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages through place names	DoR
4.3 Explore the impact of history on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples' languages as part of truth telling and healing and the Path to Treaty	DSDSATSIP
4.4 Provide early childhood education and care services with information on including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language in their early childhood programs, through capability development, newsletters and websites such as Foundations for Success	DoE
4.5 Work in partnership across government to support and promote the value of recognising, reinvigorating and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures including traditional languages	DSDSATSIP
4.6 Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language is incorporated into work across the Queensland Government as part of Acknowledgement of Country	DSDSATSIP
4.7 Explore strategies to support all schools to recognise and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country and languages of their school location on signage and school websites	DoE
4.8 Continue to the use the 'Look to the Stars' artwork to encourage conversations, across all languages, and work towards reconciliation, understanding and respect	QPS
4.9 Support and guide non-Indigenous organisations/operators to engage and promote traditional languages in a respectful way by linking with Traditional Owners and key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language stakeholders	DSDSATSIP
4.10 Develop a 'Culturally Respectful Language Guide' to inform preparation of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's internal and external documents and communications	DPC
4.11 Increase the naming of shared meeting spaces in 1 William Street using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages to grow awareness and understanding	DSDSATSIP DPC
4.12 Areas within Queensland Corrective Service facilities continue to acknowledge Traditional language through the naming of areas	QCS
4.13 Increase the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and build stronger relationships with First Nations peoples through the implementation of a National Parks First Nations Naming Project sprint	DES
4.14 Encourage the revitalisation of language in alignment with the Gurra Gurra Framework 2020-2026 through appropriate and authorised use of language	DES
4.15 Continue the use of Indigenous interpretive signage and physical activities across Queensland Recreation Centres to promote awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and culture	DTIS
4.16 Increase the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and build stronger relationships with First Nations peoples through the implementation of the Transport and Main Roads Infrastructure Naming Policy	DTMR

[CLICK TO VIEW ANOTHER PRIORITY](#)



GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

DEPARTMENT	ABBREVIATION
Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy	DCHDE
Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs	DCYJMA
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training	DESBT
Department of Environment and Science	DES
Department of Justice and Attorney-General	DJAG
Department of Education	DoE
Department of the Premier and Cabinet	DPC
Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	DSDSATSIP
Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport	DTIS
Department of Transport and Main Roads	DTMR
Queensland Corrective Services	QCS
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	QFES
Queensland Health	QH
Queensland Police Service	QPS

Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors—our First Australians—give strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

We recognise it is our collective efforts and responsibility as individuals, communities and governments to ensure equality, recognition and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across all aspects of society and everyday life.

On behalf of the Queensland Government we offer a genuine commitment to fearlessly represent, advocate for and promote the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders with unwavering determination, passion and persistence.

As we reflect on the past and give hope for the future, we walk together on our shared journey to reconciliation where all Queenslanders are equal.

Copyright

Copyright © State of Queensland, July 2021. Copyright protects this publication. Excerpts may be reproduced with acknowledgment of the State of Queensland.

This document is licensed by the State of Queensland under a Creative Attribution (CC BY) 3.0 Australian license.

CC BY License Summary Statement: In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and adapt the *Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Action Plan* as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland. To view a copy of this license, visit: www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en.

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

The information in this publication is general and does not take into account individual circumstances or situations.