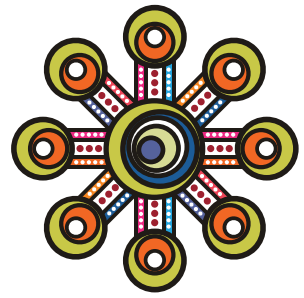


Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee
Community Connections

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Edition 22 December 2012

Message from the Chair

Hello to all and welcome to Edition 22 of the newsletter. I wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

What a busy year this has been for us all as we enter the holiday season. The QIECC and Secretariat have been extremely productive since the last newsletter with the induction of the new committee and a Ministerial workshop in early December. These significant events were well received by all participants and stakeholders and proved to be great opportunities for networking and establishing genuine working partnerships.

One could be forgiven if you have not kept up with all of our changes this year; not only has the QIECC Secretariat changed under the direction of Darren Bond, Principal Executive Officer, with the addition of two new staff, Ambrae Rogers, Executive Services Officer and Chris Day Senior Policy Officer, but they have also moved from Inala to Education House, Brisbane CBD. Our new committee which was announced in October has six new members. Five members have been reinstated, including myself.

Whilst there has been lots of change – our priority remains the same – to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders actively participating in education, training, higher education and employment to provide a quality of life that they value.

It appears that everyone out there has been very busy of late. Many of the stories in this edition are testament to the great work done throughout the state. We look forward to continually hearing of the successes within your community. Please don't be backwards in coming forwards with your news.

Planning for 2013 is well underway with our first major event being held in February. I would like to urge all readers to keep abreast of issues affecting education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and to keep your eye on websites regarding governments' efforts to close the gap.

On behalf of the QIECC I would like to extend warm wishes, a safe holiday season and a happy new year to you and your families.

Keep up to date with QIECC's activities by visiting our website www.qiecc.eq.edu.au.

Take good care.

Gina Archer
Chair, QIECC



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Caution: This newsletter could contain images and references to deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from diverse cultural backgrounds and communities. This could be upsetting to some people.

Date Claimer

2012

December

24-31 Compulsory closure for QIECC secretariat

2013

January

1-2 Compulsory closure for QIECC secretariat

27 School resumes

February

19-20 QIECC Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator Roundtable, Brisbane.

Did You Know?

Data from Department of Education and Training's Next Step 2011 – A report on the destinations of Year 12 completers from 2010 in Queensland.

- Of the respondents to the survey, 1101 Year 12 graduates from state, Catholic and independent schools were identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which made up 3.0 per cent of the total respondents.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 completers were less likely than their non-Indigenous peers to enrol in a university degree (12.9 per cent compared to 36.6 per cent).
- An upward trend is also apparent in the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 completers seeking work, showing an increase from 16.9 per cent in 2007 to 22.8 per cent in 2011.

Members Profile - Ned David



Mr David is a Kulkalaig – a traditional owner from the Central Islands in the Torres Strait - whose homeland includes Tudu (Warrior Island), lama (Yam Island) Gebarr (Gabba Island) Mucar (Cap Island) Sassie Zagai (Long Island) the surrounding reefs of Wapa (Warrior reef) and Thidu (Dungeness).

Ned is the current Chair of the Torres Strait Islanders Regional Education Council (TSIREC), a position he has held since April 2000. Ned is a member of various committees and forums. These include: Executive Member of the National Congress of Australia's First People; Chair of the Magani Lagaugal Corporation which is the Native Title Registered Body Corporate for lama (Yam Island) and Tudu; and Secretary of the Torres Strait Islanders Media Association (TSIMA).

Ned has a very broad work history that includes government and private sector. Ned's current role as the Manager of Strategic Initiatives Bound for Success Torres Strait involves working across all sectors and agencies to improve life opportunities for all students in the Torres Strait.

Minister meets new Committee

Article by Chris Day

The first committee meeting for the QIECC was held in Brisbane from 3-5 December and was attended by key stakeholders including the Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP, Minister for Education, Training and Employment, where he revealed a new action plan for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning outcomes across Queensland.

Mr Langbroek said the Newman Government was committed to providing quality education, training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

“We are already achieving some promising results in terms of attendance rates and learning outcomes for Indigenous students in Queensland,” he said.

“However, there is still more work to be done to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and this plan will help us to achieve this. Indigenous education strategies have been strongly geared towards improving educational outcomes in primary schools and high schools up until now. Our new approach will be wider in scope and look at building a continuous pathway from ‘crayon to career’ for Indigenous Queenslanders.”

In the pursuit of closing the gap in Education the new committee have been briefed and tasked with engaging community within their respective regions and provide government with the feedback from community voice to influence policy and strategy development.

A QIECC “Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator Roundtable” is set to take place in February 2013. The roundtable event, themed Evidence, Innovation, Networking, will draw on the knowledge and expertise of key stakeholders. It seeks to generate ideas, share knowledge, stimulate innovative thinking, and explore action in order to provide authentic advice to the Government on how to more effectively support and maintain parental and community engagement in the schooling process.



Deeann Natividad and Professor Yvonne Cadet-James with Minister John-Paul Langbroek.



Minister Langbroek meets new committee members and key stakeholders.

“We are already achieving some promising results in terms of attendance rates and learning outcomes for Indigenous students in Queensland”

A participants' perspective.

Article by Wendy Ingram, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support Coordinator

Cleveland District State High School & Trackers QLD Culture Club had a vision to see as many of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as possible dancing Quandamooka dances at our annual Multicultural Festival.

This vision was more than realised as our students were joined by prep students from Dunwich State School who sang the National Anthem in language. Rave reviews resounded the success of this cultural performance. PaCE Coordinators, Cheryl Thompson and David Osbourne (QLD Trackers) did a fantastic job organising Quandamooka men and women like artists Josh Walker and Tamara and to teach Quandamooka dances, and not to just to our students. Trackers Culture Club, an initiative of QLD Trackers is based at 5 school sites with many other school and community participants involved.

It was with great pride I assisted students from Cleveland District State High School travel to Cleveland State Primary School to work with Mandy Blivet to teach students dances and songs such as Yulubariba Yura (Welcome), Garigan (white heron), Merriginpah (sea eagle), Buangan (dolphin) and more.

Teachers, parents and children joined together to learn dance, song and cultural activities like story telling about kinship and more at weekend workshops on two occasions this year. The Trackers Culture Club operates along a similar framework as Scouts and Girl Guides, where by appropriate adult volunteers pass along their knowledge so that culture will survive. Seeing over 40 people of all ages dancing and yarnin' in Cleveland High School's Performance Space was inspirational. We are very glad that we signed up with Tracker's PaCE. Our regular Thursday afternoon dance lessons and practice is keeping some of our students in school and seeing a fantastic culture being held in high regard and being passed on for generations to come.



Trackers QLD Culture Club dancer Cameron Jones.



Trackers QLD Culture Club dancers Levi Hogerhyde, Cheyenne Doyle, and Christine Jones.

QIECC visits Tivoli State School

Article by Chris Day



Aunty Gina and Mrs Cheryl Voermanek talk to the students at Tivoli State School about culture and identity.

It was an interesting day at Tivoli State School when Aunty Gina dropped in to pay the students a visit. The purpose of the visit was to establish a relationship between TivoliSS and QIECC and we walked away with a lot more.

After brief introductions of the QIECC team were through we wasted no time in getting to know each of the students in the year 3/4 composite class and their teacher Mrs Cheryl Voermanek. The conversation provided insight of the students' astute knowledge and awareness of their family and backgrounds. It was astounding to realise that the students have such strong knowledge of their identity and ancestral backgrounds. Aunty Gina spoke with the children for a while instilling a clear and important lesson on the virtue of patience and of each person having a chance to talk while the remainder of the class actively listened to each of their peers.

Tivoli State School students and staff were also very eager to show their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture by distinguishing

the difference in flags before demonstrating to us their knowledge of what each flag represented. It was clear that some deadly things are happening both inside and outside of that classroom – cultural commemorations and celebrations featuring the talents of the students are a frequent event, local art projects are currently taking place which, with the collaboration of parents and community, will transpire into the school walls and buildings adorning some art pieces which encapsulate local story and tradition.

Unfortunately all good things must come to an end, and although it was time for QIECC and Aunty Gina to leave the site, we are confident that the relationship with the school, staff and the students will continue to be strengthened in the pursuit to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Aunty Joan Marshall

Article by Joan Marshall

My name is Joan Marshall (nee Dempsey) and I was born in the Mount Isa region. I have lived around this area all my life.

My family on my grandmother's side was from Lake Nash, Northern Territory (Alyawarra people) and my grandfather came from the Dejarra and Boulia area (Kalkadoon people).

I have six children and 15 grandchildren and four great grandchildren. They live all over Australia.

I have now worked and lived in Mount Isa for more than 36 years. I started as a childcare worker and did that for 10 years. Then I moved to work with YACA, a Mount Isa youth group until 2000 after which I became a Community Participation Officer for Education Qld where I work to this day.

Currently I am based at the Northern Region DETE Mount Isa office and my job is to offer support and advice to the principals, staff, students and their families in all of the primary and secondary schools in the Mount Isa and surrounding areas (About half the size of the state of Victoria!)

In my youth, I worked on cattle stations as a drover with my family. I rode horses and did general station work and while it was a hard life, it was also a good one because I was still with my family. I was taught a bush education and I learnt a lot about my own culture. I lived it – I didn't learn it from a book.

The good thing now about schools is that all Aboriginal kids are expected to get an equal education which wasn't like that in my time. The disappointing thing is that Aboriginal languages and culture are still not really being taught in schools out here. Many of the elders who can teach this are getting very old and will soon be gone and these important things will be lost.

If I was in charge of education, I would make teachers start with learning about their student's identities and Aboriginal culture. The first week of school would be about getting to know who the students really are so that teachers could better understand them and better deal with their everyday problems. That way there would be a lot less suspensions and kids being sent



Aunty Joan Marshall.

home. There's too much freedom for kids these days – there's not many rules that are the same between home and school. Computers and mobile phones are lowering attention spans and problem solving skills.

All teachers need to be helping our Aboriginal children learn that their culture is unique to this country – that we are from the oldest living culture in the world. If kids don't know this, then they need to be guided on ways to find out. They can be made proud of this. All schools need to have family rooms so that parents can feel comfortable to come in and talk with teachers. Parents are the 'tools' to open up the potential of their kids.

Teachers need more support from the community and at the same time parents have to be willing to work with the school. It's a two way thing. I suppose I can say that overall, there's a lot of good things happening for Aboriginal people in Australia now with improvements in education, however our elders aren't getting any younger and we need to learn from them before they are all gone. We can learn out of a text book when no one's around, in the meantime we need to learn from our people.

Elders' Morning Tea

Article by Chris Day



Community gathering for final 2012 Elders' morning tea.

On Wednesday 19 December 2012 the Queensland Education Consultative Committee (QIECC) and the Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU) hosted our fourth and final Elders morning tea for the year.

The morning teas have been well attended throughout the year and our final gathering was no exception. The networking opportunities that these morning teas provide are critical to ensuring the relationships within community are maintained and strengthened. It was a great occasion to reconnect and reminisce on the year that was.

The next morning tea is scheduled to take place in early 2013.

Top right: Aunty Gina and Darren Bond yarning with Mike Byrne, Executive Director of Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

Bottom right: ISSU staff member Jess Holland chats to community members



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Acknowledgments

QIECC Logo Design by Bibi Barba

This Indigenous contemporary cluster style represents two distinct but connected groups, or in this case, circles. They form the basis for the two-way Torres Strait Islander Communities and education sectors. The distinct sectors are inter-connected to the central body allowing a direct two-way relationship while maintaining their individual uniqueness.



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