



QCEC Response to Draft 2 of the redeveloped Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus

June 2017

Introduction

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) provides this submission on Draft 2 of the redeveloped Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus, to inform further development.

QCEC is the peak strategic body with state-wide responsibilities for Catholic schooling in Queensland. This submission is provided on behalf of the five Diocesan Catholic school authorities and 17 Religious Institutes and other incorporated bodies which, between them, operate a total of 302 Catholic schools that educate almost 147,000 students in Queensland.

Background

QCEC has consulted with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Network to discuss the second draft of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus. This feedback is a result of those consultations. The QCEC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Network includes representatives from Catholic School Authorities across Queensland.

Feedback/comments

- The draft syllabus is very well articulated and comprehensive. The syllabus is felt to be very content heavy and the assessment tasks have a high expectation e.g. 2000 words, however, it was noted that this is in line with the other General syllabuses.
- This syllabus would require a confident and experienced teacher.
- The syllabus has strong commonalities of content and intent, for example, the firm grounding in identifying and analysing Indigenous worldviews. QCEC agrees that this will benefit all students, especially in the development of analytical, reasoning and critical thinking skills.
- The conceptual framework of *My Land, My Tracks* (Ernie Grant 1998), has been used in the pedagogical and conceptual frameworks of this syllabus (p. 8). As a planning and reflective tool, it provides a space for meaningful integration of Indigenous topic areas. There are recognisable elements that connect with and relate to each other such as: relationships, language, culture, land, place, time. Issues around stereotyping, cultural assumptions and Indigenous cultural diversity are important considerations and are present in the syllabus which is supported by QCEC.

- In *Topic 1: Resilience* (p. 35), there is a strong grounding in social, legal and cultural history of Indigenous peoples. This ‘strength-based’ approach rather than a ‘deficit’ approach is supported by QCEC.
- The glossary was not as well articulated as it could be – terminology such as ‘kinship’ ‘country’ and ‘assimilation’ are defined in a simple sense but many other terms are absent such as: ‘insider/outsider business’; ‘cultural protocols’; ‘segregation’ and ‘sovereignty’. To assist, the excellent *QCAA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Handbook* (2010) could be referenced (p. 64) or be an embedded source in the glossary (rather than just a link to QCAA resources (p. 8)).
- The syllabus is embedded in the “Inquiry Approach” (p. 10). The syllabus allows for students to be exposed to diverse views outside of those articulated in the syllabus which is supported by QCEC.

Conclusion

QCEC welcomes all opportunity to input into the process of syllabus redevelopment and would be pleased to discuss further any issues raised in this response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee-Anne Perry', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Lee-Anne Perry AM
Executive Director