

QIECC

Queensland Indigenous Education
Consultative Committee

Caboolture Community Forum Focus on Introduction of Preparatory Year

Wednesday 6 September, 2006

The QIECC, first and foremost, has to

“Consult with Indigenous people to hear the range of views on education”,

and then,

“provide expert advice to Education Ministers”, “promote constructive dialogue and engagement”, and “promote public awareness”

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Caution:

These materials could contain references to deceased Indigenous people from diverse cultural backgrounds and communities. This could be upsetting to some people.

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Acknowledgements

Good will of Gubbi Gubbi Elder, Dr Eve Fesl who was unavailable to perform a welcome to country.

Mr Tex Chapman for his good will; and Mr Frank Brown for his Acknowledgement of Country and Mrs Cathy Brown for her support.

Ms Wendy Stonehouse and Ms Lainie Heron for their administrative support in organising, setting up and reporting on the Forum; also thank you to Mr Jeremy Grace for his physical assistance in setting up.

Ms Ann-Marie Boyle for her presentation.

Mrs Ruth Ross for her promotion of the Forum in the Caboolture district.

Ms Sandra Phillips for her facilitation of the Forum's Open Discussion.

The QIECC Membership for their time and expertise.

All the community members who attended and who also actively participated in the day's proceedings, making it the success it was.

Ms Dale Chapman and her colleagues at Dillybag for their catering.



AGENDA

- 10.00am Community Forum open
Arrivals, refreshments, social introductions and perusal of displays.
- 11.05am Welcome to Country / Acknowledgement of Country
By respected local Elder Mr Frank Brown
- 11.08am QIECC Membership introductions
Commenced by Dr Penny Tripcony, Chair
- 11.10am Introduction and presentation from committee members
- Mr Albert Holt
 - Mr Darran Kennedy
 - Mr Beresford Domic
 - Ms Gina Archer
 - Mrs Tracey Harbour
 - Ms Joann Schmider
 - Ms Jane Ceolin
 - Mr Ned David
- Absent: Ron Weatherall, Leann Wilson, Tiga Bayles & Adrian Miller
- 11.25am Ms Anne-Marie Boyle, Principal Advisor, Strategic Implementation
Department of Education and the Arts
Introduction to Prep Year and its importance (with video)
- 11.55am Open Discussion begins
Facilitated by Ms Sandra Phillips
- 1:30pm Lunch
- 2:30pm Plenary

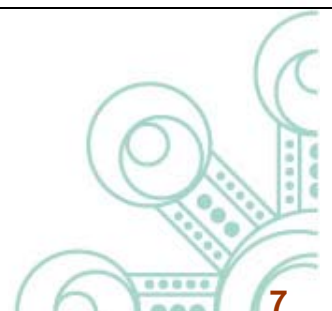


Participant List

John Nicol	Beenleigh R_E
Donna Jorgensen	Brisbane Catholic Education Commission, Indigenous Unit
Clare Doyle	Brisbane Catholic Education Commission, Indigenous Unit
Patrick Legg	Brisbane Catholic Education Commission, Indigenous Unit
Lynn Chapman	Brisbane School of Distance Education
Jacqui Phillips	Caboolture Child Care Link
Ruth Ross	Caboolture, Morayfield and Tullawong State High Schools
Stacey Douglas	Centacare JPET
Cherissma Blackman	Child Safety, Dept. of
Enid Kina	Community Member
Eileen Williams	Creche & Kindergarten Association
Felicia Hancox	Creche & Kindergarten Association
Neale Brosnan	Creche & Kindergarten Association
Jan Cullen	Creche & Kindergarten Association
Lilian Woods	Creche & Kindergarten Association, Caboolture
Gavin Tyson	Deception Bay, Communities for Children
Alison Wheeler	Deception Bay, Communities for Children
Robyn Sandri	Education, Training and the Arts (Indigenous Education Policy Unit), Dept. of



Alannah Roberts	Education, Training and the Arts (Indigenous Education Policy Unit), Dept. of
Anne-Marie Boyle	Education, Training and the Arts (Strategic Implementation Branch), Dept of
May Bemrose	Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (formerly Education, Science and Training), Dept. of
Robyn Burnett	Employment and Workplace Relations, Dept. of
Bruce Wasley	Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Dept. of (FACSI)
Margaret Robinson-Sabath	Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Dept. of (FACSI)
Lyn Goode	Koorie Mail
Kylie Ruther	Morayfield State High School
Anthony Shearer	Queensland Studies Authority
Mayrah Dreise	Queensland Studies Authority
Victor Hart	Queensland University of Technology, Oodgeroo Unit
James Sandy	Sandgate State High School
Jeff Cassidy	Sandgate State High School
Lisa Russell	Tullawong State High School
Peter Hoehn	Tullawong State High School
Julie Dewson	Tullawong State High School, Teacher Aide
Mary Sinclair	Tullawong State School
Sandra Phillips	QUT Caboolture



Statement of Facilitation

After Acknowledgement of Country, the introduction of the QIECC membership, and the formal introduction to Prep Year, the *Open Discussion* began, recognising that all participants were experts.

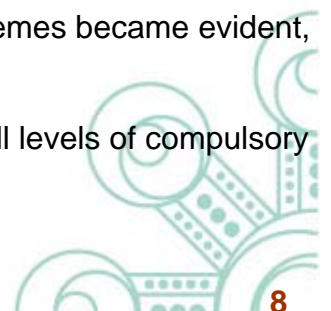
Comments were made and questions were posed by individuals, these contributions led to facilitated group discussion often with expert response by QIECC Members and other participants who had relevant expertise to contribute. All contributions were scribed for later plenary feedback and confirmation.

At a number of points through discussion, particular expertise was called for and contributed by participants, for example, from the Preparatory Year curriculum designer from Queensland Studies Authority, representatives from C&K, representatives from Gympie District Office of Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) and Department of Families And Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA), insight from the higher education sector and independent schooling sector; as well as from parents and grandparents.

The first contribution was a statement from a local district Community Education Counsellor and grandparent about the importance of the Prep Year and the fact of it being non-compulsory means that we all have to make extra effort to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment and participation. This contribution also highlighted Indigenous education workers as being central to this goal, and this was framed as a question about resources for the employment of such workers in the Prep Years.

Throughout the ensuing discussion, several recurring themes became evident, these included:

1. the need for Indigenous staff in Prep and indeed all levels of compulsory schooling;



2. community awareness of the Prep Year, and the need for targeted and friendly awareness-raising at the local level with the leadership and participation of school Principals so that our students ensure achievement and readiness in anticipation of Year 1;
3. whole-of-government program delivery particularly between Education, Training, Health and where relevant also Child Safety;
4. cross-cultural training of teachers and support staff;
5. level-appropriate curriculum that reflects Indigenous Australian experiences; and,
6. the need for community members to be aware of, and where relevant input to review processes such as the Strengthening Support for Indigenous students project.

The participant list detailed at the beginning of this report, highlights the diversity of Indigenous representation at the Forum, but what it doesn't show is how many children these same participants connect themselves to. Inspired by QIECC member, Mr Albert Holt's reference to the number of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren he and his wife have, the facilitator asked the Forum to note on a circulated piece of paper the number of children they are directly connected to. The total number of children was 349.

The multiplicity of roles played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians was once again in evidence – professionals, community members, aunties, uncles and great/grand/parents.



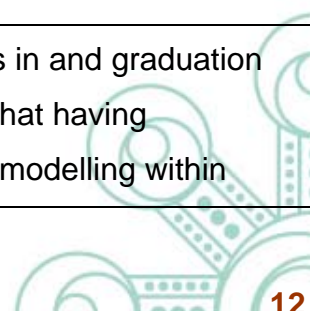
SUMMARY OF OPEN DISCUSSION

Table of issues and themes confirmed through Plenary Wrap Up

<p>Issues / Themes: Note-list includes all issues/themes brought up throughout the day</p>
<p>Early childhood education (pre Prep), access and equity issues.</p>
<p>(Readiness) Transitional support for Prep - need to ensure children come to Prep, because believe once students attend they will want to come back.</p>
<p>(Readiness) Transitional support for Year 1.</p>
<p>Quality of relationships and interactions at the local level.</p>
<p>Indigenous employment in schools and the related public sectors is critical to improving outcomes.</p> <p>Employment of Indigenous teachers, teacher aides, community education counsellors, learning coordinators, and other support staff.</p> <p>Further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New positions need to be created; • Existing workers need to be supported; • Exiting workers need to be appropriately replaced.
<p>Awareness of Prep in Indigenous communities and families.</p> <p>Marketing and communication activities.</p> <p>Information products.</p> <p>Forums and frequent and friendly opportunities for face-to-face parent and school sector contact.</p> <p>Principals to make this a priority.</p> <p>Department holding Principals accountable.</p> <p>School environments being family-friendly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait</p>

Issues / Themes: Note-list includes all issues/themes brought up throughout the day
Islander parents and families.
School-readiness success of community-based C&K sector could provide valuable lessons and models for Prep.
Research into the impact of Prep on families and communities considered important.
<p>Parent and family engagement is critical. The schools need to be partners in creating and supporting ongoing parent school relationships.</p> <p>Recognising the different contexts and requirements between schools where there are Indigenous majorities and those urban and rural schools where Indigenous minorities in the wider community as well as in the classroom.</p>
Catholic sector has prioritised meeting with parents to explain Prep in the Catholic system; rolling out forums throughout the state.
Cross-cultural in-servicing of non-Indigenous teachers and support staff is vital. <i>Crossing Cultures</i> training mentioned as useful, but not the be-all and end-all.
<p>The QIECC provides advice to state and commonwealth ministers of education, and now is a signatory to the Funding Agreement sign-offs between the Commonwealth and the State.</p> <p>The strength of the QIECC lies in its capacities and mechanisms to consult widely across communities.</p> <p>The strength of the QIECC also lies in the receptivity of government.</p> <p>The strength of the QIECC also relies on its formal relationships. For example, meetings with Ministers, relationships with State and Commonwealth departments responsible for education, membership on advisory groups.</p>
Curriculum that supports true history of the nation and that supports practical

Issues / Themes: Note-list includes all issues/themes brought up throughout the day
life skills and social development seen as critical.
<p>The whole-of-government, partnership approaches are a good basis for ensuring better coordination across all departments and portfolios.</p> <p>Education is not a silo unto itself.</p> <p>To improve educational outcomes it is vital that the relationship between departments and programs are coordinated. For example, DATSIP, Health and Child Safety.</p> <p>(The vision / hearing testing recommendation being a prime example.)</p>
Important for members of the community to be aware of and provide input to reviews and other processes happening within departments; eg Review of Support Structures, Review of Indigenous Education Worker Strategy.
Data collection and sharing amongst government departments and programs also important.
Literacy and numeracy intervention and support important for all, particularly for those children and young people at-risk.
Early intervention support mechanisms prior to school-age entry.
Before- and after-school care programs at the school, important.
Welfare to work, mutual obligations, regimes will impact heavily on Indigenous families and communities.
Having parental involvement as a targeted component, for example, make schools accountable for this.
Recommend prioritising increased Indigenous enrolments in and graduation from early childhood teacher education; with recognition that having Indigenous teachers at that level will act as powerful role modelling within



Issues / Themes: Note-list includes all issues/themes brought up throughout the day

communities.

Embedding Indigenous perspectives across curriculum is being undertaken across-the-board, for example, QSA curriculum development from prep to Year 12.

Partners for Success document – ‘Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools P-12’ is developed and currently being promoted.

At the same time, some higher education institutions are undertaking curriculum reform to embed Indigenous perspectives, which will contribute hopefully to the employment of Indigenous academics in that sector, as well as create better-informed professionals who graduate from such curriculum.



Table of Questions Raised

NAME & ORGANISATION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Community Education Counsellor	<p>We see how important it is for parents to send their kids to prep year, as it is not compulsory is this going to mean that our kids are going to be behind – are they going to consider giving more money for teacher aides to assist our children with this downfall – resourcing of Indigenous workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this something that QIECC has been discussing – Prominent issue for the QIECC and will continue to be (QIECC member) • extremely lucky to have Indigenous workers in education and lack of resourcing has been a constant problem and it is not just prep (QIECC member) 	<p>Difficult to know how to answer, yes it is going to be difficult for kids not attending prep to understanding relationships to prep speak etc. Early learning record is going to be completed for prep so schools will need to be aware of that some children will not have a learning record.</p> <p>Developing a brochure – what prep is, why send you child to prep, not losing your culture if your child goes to prep.</p> <p>Each of the jurisdictions will be responsible for advocating for extra assistance for those kids not attending prep</p> <p>Issue: Principals need to develop partnerships with the local community and groups.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How at ground level do parents find out about prep – they don't go into the school room. 2. Are the prep teachers culturally aware and do they participate in a cultural awareness 	<p>DETA – Communication has been one of the big agenda its to target all the groups across QLD – identify the main areas/places that we can get information out i.e. today's forum, invitation,</p>

NAME & ORGANISATION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	program.	developing brochures/postcards and sending them out to schools, working with engagement centres, working with the indigenous unit in central office (drawing on their information, District CEC, find key people in education. Working with Health Department for those not yet entered into education sector as yet. Through childcare forums and childcare centres, word of mouth.
	How is the marketing being measured by Education QLD to measure their success in targeting Indigenous students and parents?	There has been no explicit tools implemented to evaluate the marketing of prep to Indigenous students and parents
FACSIA	What ideas have been tried to encourage parents to consider prep?	DEST running playgroups in schools to encourage parents to bring their children to schools and for parents to take over the playgroups PSPI initiative.
C&K	What is the commitment from EQ, Catholic Education and Independent sector to target prep Indigenous parents and employ Indigenous teacher aides to support Indigenous students?	Not sure of the real communication that is taking place. Workshops with parents in the Catholic sector.
Parent of child going to prep next year – also works in school	Noted that she has been to one school meeting which was to sign her child up for prep but this was the only information that was provided by the school and as a parent has many questions that	Another parent who works in a school said that she found out information from the internet and this was really the only place that she found useful information.

NAME & ORGANISATION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	she wanted answered.	<p>She suggested that staff need to go out to communities and speak openly.</p> <p>Employing Indigenous people – not accessing services as there is no equity. Worked for 12 months in school with 50% Indigenous students but continue to refuse to employ Indigenous workers.</p> <p>Partners for Success, Dare to Lead should be installed in schools by the end of 2006 and if it isn't it could it be instigated as compulsory for all schools.</p>
QIECC member	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the implications/choices in relation to childcare/daycare etc. – what does the whole 0-5 look like. 2. What investigation has been done about the impacts on families (pre-trialled prep schools) – particularly for working parents, are support structures being considered 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major change is the age of students, introduction of prep does not mean that kids will go to school earlier, rather they will go to school later (by 6 months). As a teacher it is a very positive change for children who are born later in the year and continue to lag behind until year 12 so introduction of prep will help with the lag. 2. Services for pre-prep are hard to map and there is very different forms of funding. Govt

NAME & ORGANISATION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
		<p>forget to acknowledge the number of parents who stay home with their children. There are other options such as day care centre and family day care services (childcare in the home) but which is extremely hard to reach. C & K do provide services in remote areas (only 27 Indigenous C&K services) which raises questions of equity. (Jan Cullen, C&K).</p> <p>It was a deliberate decision by govt not to make prep compulsory so that parents have a choice about where their children attend prep alternatives.</p>
C&K	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is it going to become compulsory for children to go to prep. 2. Is the committee going to have the ability to raise and make changes to improve education in Queensland for Indigenous people. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changing prep to being compulsory is not policy that is being considered for prep as yet. 2. QIECC are the only committee that give advice on Indigenous education matters to the Minister, but there are not guarantees that this will trickle down to the school setting, but the structure is set up so that the response would be – that is the responsibility of the districts. QIECC is responsible for signing off on the Indigenous Education Agreement reports within the Department of Education, Training and Arts, and offering advice through the Minister,

NAME & ORGANISATION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
		<p>although sometimes this advice is not taken as is given.</p> <p>QIECC has a number. of priorities and representation on committees is important.</p> <p>The Indigenous Education Workers strategy has gone nowhere although there were programs and other mechanisms included in them.</p> <p>Minister is going to listen to a committee of eleven Community members will be dictated by community forums such as this and similar to give bite to the Committee.</p>

Recommendations: -

1. Access services – transport, infrastructure, addressing disadvantages, include strategies that build capacity of communities
2. Compulsory hearing testing for children in the prep year
3. Indigenous men and women, appropriate Indigenous resourcing in schools



STATEMENT OF OUTCOMES

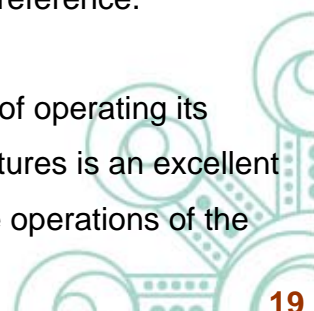
As a consequence of the Community Forum at Caboolture, it is anticipated that it will have a number of positive impacts to influence the work of the QIECC and its feedback to government and also for the engagement of Community.

As part of its Terms of Reference, the Committee is to obtain views from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in relation of Indigenous education matters, in order to represent community views at a Ministerial level. Outcomes of the Forum will be relayed to both the State and Commonwealth Ministers of Education. The report will also be posted on the QIECC website.

The focus of the Forum being on the introduction of the preparatory year and early childhood education more generally, the importance of Indigenous children accessing the prep year was highlighted as a key message. Its importance in overcoming disadvantage and improving longer term outcomes was reiterated by several participants at the forum, with more than one participant challenging the non-compulsory status of such an important year. In the absence of it being non-compulsory, it is essential that parents, community members, government agencies, education systems, individual schools and all workers in schools, particularly Indigenous education workers, deliver the message of its importance as widely as possible.

The QIECC Strategic Plan has as one its stand alone priority areas, Early Childhood Education, highlighting the importance that appropriate programs and support in the early years has in increasing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The QIECC Operational Plan creates actions and timelines that respond to the priority areas of the Strategic Plan, and takes into account its agreed values and its terms of reference.

Additionally, it was noted more than once, C&K's system of operating its kindergartens and preschools and their governance structures is an excellent example of true parent and community involvement in the operations of the



education system that their children participate in. C&K centres are managed by boards, comprising parents, thereby ensuring engagement at the highest level.

C&K provide a pathway for early childhood education through their kindergarten and preschool service. In addition, C&K have 27 identified Indigenous centres, which have upwards of 90% Indigenous enrolments, employ a significant number of Indigenous teachers, assistants and other workers and who are further supported by a centrally staffed Indigenous Support Unit. One of the factors discussed which lends itself to the success of students transitioning from C&K's Indigenous services, is the active engagement of parents and the employment of Indigenous workers.

Two QIECC members had an opportunity to attend the 2006 annual conference of the C&K Indigenous Support Unit, attended by staff from most of the 27 Indigenous centres. QIECC have included, as part of their Operational Plan, to provide support to C&K's Indigenous Support Unit, given that it is a successful pathway for Indigenous students to transition to formal schooling. It was agreed at the Forum, that some of C&K's practices could be used as examples of good practice for early education for Indigenous children, particularly in the area of employment of Indigenous staff.

Further, support mechanisms that the Catholic system has put in place to inform and engage parents and community about preparatory year in Catholic schools have been successful. The Catholic sector has prioritised meeting with parents to explain Prep in the Catholic system through rolling forums throughout the state.

It is anticipated that those community members present, are now more informed and able to more readily approach Principals and schools about enrolling their children in prep and other matters affecting their childrens' education, at a local level. It is further anticipated that these same parents and other community members can engage more widely in education matters by giving feedback in other forums.