Solid partners Solid futures

A partnership approach for excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood, education, training and employment from 2013 to 2016
Solid partners **Solid futures**

*Solid partners Solid futures* is a recognition providing those conditions that support the growth of each and every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person is the shared responsibility of all Queenslanders.

There are many challenging transitions as people move through early childhood settings, schools, training organisations, universities and workplaces. We aim then to build a continuous, supported pathway for our young people, from ‘crayon to career’. This requires a range of different people working together towards a common goal.

*Solid partners Solid futures* is an action plan for excellence in Indigenous early childhood, education, training and employment. It is a plan for raising the expectations held by each partner, by the young person, their family, community, educators and employers, and the expectations they hold of each other. It is a plan for these same partners, at every stage, to collectively build the career aspirations of each young person. It is a plan for partners to engage and connect with each other in a genuine, purposeful manner.

Critically, it is a plan which recognises the strength with which young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders identify with their cultures and their contribution to our great state.

Our traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures continue to place great importance on the process of learning, on the exchange of wisdom and on the development and application of skills and expertise. In this way, our cultures are our greatest asset. Excellence in Indigenous education, training and employment, then, is weaving local culture through our actions.

These are the guiding principles of *Solid partners Solid futures*. They have come through strongly as we have spoken with students, families, schools, communities, industry and businesses, vocational education and tertiary institutions, and members of the early childhood education and care sector around Queensland. We thank you for this important contribution.

*Solid partners Solid futures* outlines our commitments over the next four years. It identifies new partnership opportunities and proposes strengthening existing ones.

The Newman Government will prove an important and dependable partner and will make the contributions required to see the next four years as a success. We wish *Solid partners Solid futures* to be the clear marker to which we point and say: “here is where the promise of great opportunity for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people was realised by our collective action, and that Queensland is all the greater for it.”

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**HON JOHN-PAUL LANGBROEK MP**  
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

**HON GLEN ELMES MP**  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier
Overview

Goal
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the confidence, skills and knowledge to make a valuable contribution — socially, culturally and economically — to the wellbeing of their families and communities and to all Queenslanders.

Purpose
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the support they need to enjoy and achieve success throughout their educational journey from early childhood through to employment.

Key drivers
Two key drivers underpin the development of *Solid partners Solid futures*:
1. rapidly growing and young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population
2. significant gaps exist in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Partnership
*Solid partners Solid futures* calls for a partnership approach to improve early childhood, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. *Solid partners Solid futures* will be owned and taken forward by all Queenslanders. We all have a role to play to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

As the peak advisory body to government on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training, the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC) has a central role to play in the implementation of *Solid partners Solid futures*.

Principles
These principles will guide our collaborative actions and effort from 2013 to 2016 across early childhood, school education, training, further study and into employment:
- effective engagement and connections
- working together better and smarter
- cultural capability and recognition
- supporting successful transitions
- building workforce and leadership capacity.
Outcomes

Solid partners Solid futures aims to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the support they need to enjoy and achieve success at these critical phases:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 0 to 8 years of age learn, thrive and make successful transitions from home to early childhood education and care and school.

2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students are enrolled, engaged and achieving in school; and progressing at the same rate as non-Indigenous students.

3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make a successful transition from school to training, further study or into employment.

4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people make a successful transition from training or further study into employment.

Actions

To support achievement of these outcome areas a range of actions have been identified for implementation by the Queensland Government in collaboration with partners.

Implementation and review

The Queensland Government is responsible for leading Solid partners Solid futures. The Queensland Government will monitor and report on progress in 2015.
Introduction

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first peoples of Australia and have the oldest continuing cultures in the world. They are rich and diverse cultures which benefit all Queenslanders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have overcome great hardships and continue to flourish — becoming leaders of society, making invaluable contributions to public life, growing businesses, raising families, creating community — all the while celebrating their cultures.

Despite these positives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders generally continue to be less likely to enjoy school outcomes and employment opportunities similar to those of non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Achieving improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is of the highest priority for Queensland.

Solid partners Solid futures was developed in consultation and partnership with key stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, education providers from early childhood education to schooling and tertiary education, private industry and government agencies.

Key drivers for change

The discussion paper on the Development of a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood, school education, training, tertiary education and employment action plan 2013–2016 described two of the significant challenges underpinning the development of Solid partners Solid futures. In summary, these challenges were:

1. Queensland has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population that is rapidly growing and young and is predicted to have the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia by 2016; and
2. despite a considerable amount of goodwill, effort and investment significant gaps still exist in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders across a range of indicators.

These are our key drivers for change. The current gap in outcomes combined with the rapidly growing and young population highlights that if we continue to do what we’ve always done, there is a significant risk of the gaps growing wider. There must be a significant and deliberate focus on achieving equitable outcomes for, and with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while lifting outcomes for all learners. These key drivers present a real opportunity for a new approach that intensifies our efforts to accelerate and sustain progress.
Partnerships – the way forward

It is well known that success in education requires a range of things to work together, such as the health and wellbeing of a learner; the quality of their home and family life; their motivation and interest in, and experience of, learning; a sense of identity, culture and self-esteem; mastery of language, literacy and numeracy; high expectations and support; and formal learning.

Everyone has a role to play to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. This includes the learner, their parents, families and communities, government agencies, education providers (from early childhood education to schooling and tertiary education), business and industry. By working together towards common objectives, building on our strengths and complementing each other’s contributions, we can create effective and strong partnerships to achieve significant improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Solid partners Solid futures calls for a partnership approach to improve early childhood, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Solid partners Solid futures is for all of Queensland, to be owned and taken forward by all Queenslanders.

Engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is essential if true partnerships are to be established. As the peak community advisory body to government, the QIECC has a critical role to play in the implementation of Solid partners Solid futures.

The early childhood, school education, training, tertiary and employment systems in Queensland are large, complex and diverse, with numerous funders and providers of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In every part of these systems, there needs to be a strong focus on services tailored to meet the unique and local needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services that are delivered in a culturally capable and safe manner.

To realise the goal of Solid partners Solid futures, Queensland’s early childhood, school education, training, tertiary and employment systems need to work in a collaborative manner — making the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the centre of what is done. Every organisation within the system has a unique and important role in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes. Ensuring all of these organisations work together to improve the education and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requires a partnership approach.

**PARTNERS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students and young people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, caregivers, families and communities
- Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee
- Early Childhood Education and Care service providers
- State and non-state schools
- Private and public training providers
- Universities and broader higher education sector
- Statutory authorities and entities
- Not-for-profit sector
- Community organisations
- Professional associations
- Australian Government
- Queensland Government
- Business and industry
- Philanthropic organisations
- Peak bodies and interest groups
Partnership actions

*Solid partners Solid futures* will build a continuous pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from ‘crayon to career’. This means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are supported and engaged in learning from early childhood education and care through to schooling, training, tertiary education and employment. It outlines specific commitments to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in early childhood, education and employment from 2013 to 2016.

**Goal**

By delivering on the commitments outlined in *Solid partners Solid futures*, our goal is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the confidence, skills and knowledge to make a valuable contribution — socially, culturally and economically — to the wellbeing of their families and communities and to all Queenslanders.

**Outcomes**

Learning is a life-long activity, beginning in the home through to formal settings including early childhood education and care, school, training and higher education institutions and the workplace. *Solid partners Solid futures* will ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the necessary support to enjoy and achieve success at these four critical phases and throughout their education journey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 0 to 8 years of age learn, thrive and make successful transitions from home to early childhood education and care and school.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled, engaged and achieving in school; and transitioning at the same rate as non-Indigenous students.</td>
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<td>Phase 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make a successful transition from school to training, further study or into employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make a successful transition from training or further study into employment.</td>
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“Establishing clear transitional pathways through each educational phase (early childhood education and care, school education, post-school education and training, workplace), and the provision of appropriate student support services and individualised case-management and mentoring support to ensure the successful transitioning of students from one educational phase to the next is critical to successful outcomes.”

*(Submission)*
At a glance

**Phase 1**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 0 to 8 years of age learn, thrive and make successful transitions from home to early childhood education and care and school.

**Phase 2**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled, engaged and achieving at school; and transitioning at the same rates as non-Indigenous students.

**Phase 3**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make a successful transition from school to training, further study or into employment.

**Phase 4**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people make a transition from training or further study into employment.
Principles

These principles will guide the actions and effort of all partners from 2013 to 2016 across early childhood, school education, training and employment. They are essential to achieving the required outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY PRINCIPLE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Effective engagement and connections</td>
<td>Genuine engagement and connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at all levels is fundamental. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be involved in the development, design and driving of solutions to improve outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working together better and smarter</td>
<td>Working together, better and smarter across government agencies, education providers (from early childhood education to schooling and tertiary education), communities, business and industry, and with learners, their parents and families is a critical part of improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. All programs and services, whether mainstream or specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, need to be informed by evidence of what works for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural capability and recognition</td>
<td>Connection to culture is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. It is a key factor in their wellbeing. Efforts to improve outcomes must build on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and identities and ensure they are key ingredients woven through their learning and education experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting successful transitions</td>
<td>Whether it is supporting early childhood development, setting strong educational foundations, or providing individuals with skills for the economy, preparing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to successfully make transitions is critical to improving outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building workforce and leadership capacity</td>
<td>A workforce that is prepared and appropriately skilled to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students, parents and community is essential to improving outcomes. The need for inspiring, committed, proactive and informed leadership is crucial to establishing and maintaining a culture that is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and facilitates their engagement and successful participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 0 to 8 years of age learn, thrive and make successful transitions from home to early childhood education and care and school.

Early childhood is widely acknowledged as a critical period of physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth. Quality early year services support families, and their children's learning and wellbeing. Participation in quality early childhood education and care programs helps build strong foundations for children's successful learning. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families in the early years was identified as a key theme during consultation undertaken to develop this plan. Particular emphasis was given to the key transition periods from home to early childhood and care services, and then from kindergarten to school. Engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, carers, families and communities as partners in shaping a child’s early learning and development is critical to improving outcomes. Evidence shows that outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are significantly improved when early childhood education and care services adopt a holistic focus that integrates a range of different services (e.g. education, health and wellbeing and family support).

“Early Years learning must be a priority.”  
(Submission)

MAREEBA CHILDREN AND FAMILY CENTRE (CFC)
The Mareeba CFC has established a hearing-impaired playgroup in response to a need for a service to support a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with hearing problems. The centre coordinator said a qualified early years intervention teacher runs the playgroup which began this year with a small group of families participating. “You can see an improvement in the children’s speech,” she said. “They’re responding really well to the multi-sensory activities.” The playgroup also supports the families by providing parents with information and activities to help them support their child with a hearing loss.
Key initiatives for 2013–16

• Support place-based coordination of programs and resources to integrate delivery of quality early years services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

• Invest in culturally appropriate teaching and learning by:
  – developing digital resources to support the use of *Foundations for Success – Guideline for extending and enriching learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Kindergarten Year*
  – continuing to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational leadership through the *Remote Indigenous Professional Development (RIPD)* project which promotes understanding and use of the early years learning framework using a culturally and linguistically appropriate model
  – delivering a mentoring program which values and uses expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, builds on local networks and develops capabilities and best practice at a community level
  – developing a guideline to support educators in interpreting and applying the English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) framework in early childhood settings
  – delivering a biennial workshop in partnership with early years providers to showcase successful practice and build strong networks in the sector.

• Increase access and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early childhood programs by:
  – implementing the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Early Childhood (EATSIPEC) pilot to support kindergarten providers to deliver quality culturally competent early childhood education programs
  – continue to support early years services that provide integrated early childhood education and care, family support and child and maternal health, such as children and family centres, early years centres and early years services operating in remote parts of Queensland
  – implementing the Pre-Kindergarten Grants Program to support kindergarten enrolment and participation, enhance capacity of early years services to effectively engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and deliver inclusive early childhood education programs.

• Improve transitions between home, early childhood settings and school by:
  – developing resources to support parents as first teachers in partnership with educators, building on the *Foundations for Success – Guideline for extending and enriching learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Kindergarten Year*
  – developing guidelines in collaboration with the early years sector, the schooling sector and Queensland Studies Authority to support continuity of teaching and learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

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REMOTE INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (RIPD)

The RIPD project supports and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood educators in remote areas of Queensland to understand and use the *Early Years Learning Framework* and improve educational outcomes for children in their care. The Indigenous Pedagogical Leaders played a key role in contextualising the program across the state and empowering the more than 200 mostly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

“Great presenters (who) helped our understanding and helped us to ‘claim’ our own learning – has been empowering. Can move from this week with more confidence and understanding.”

“We’ve had a great facilitator that understood Indigenous culture.”

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STRENGTH-TO-STRENGTH THREE-DAY WORKSHOP

The Strength-to-Strength three-day workshop in May 2013, attended by more than 160 participants, aimed to strengthen Indigenous leadership in early childhood education and care, build good practice in the effective delivery of the *Early Years Learning Framework* for Indigenous children and their families, and connect Indigenous remote and urban educators and services.

“...we need more workshops like this; fantastic opportunity — needs to be run every year; looking forward to future ones; would have loved more time for each (session) so presenters can talk in depth; some sessions only just scratched the surface — need to get into stuff a bit deeper and apply it to practical contexts.”

“...being able to share passion for early learning with like-minded people from a diverse skills base; networking and sharing ideas; opportunity to network and discuss/yarn about the sessions to unpack them; the interaction with other staff from other places — all having the same goal — the child.”
Phase 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled, engaged and achieving in school; and progressing at the same rate as non-Indigenous students.

Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are attending school and engaged with their learning is important in assisting them to acquire the skills they need for life. There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement. The capacity to read, write and communicate in Standard Australian English (SAE) is the foundation for all learning in Australia. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as well as their parents and relatives, speak English as an additional language or dialect (EALD). One of the key elements to achieving improved outcomes is ensuring all teachers have high expectations for every learner and apply an understanding of the background, identity, language and culture of all learners into what and how they teach. All children and young people must make a number of key education-related transitions. These include starting school, moving to high school, going onto senior and then onto further training, study or work. Successfully coping with these transitions and continuing to learn is vital to students' success at school.

“If teachers are to develop cultural and linguistic competence, an authentic educational process will be needed and that cannot be an hour after work with a PowerPoint and a bowl of lollies.”

(Submission)
Cairns West Academic Success Guarantee

Staff and the community at Cairns West State School are focused on tailoring teaching and learning to meet the needs of the school’s highly mobile student population from diverse backgrounds. Students who have 95 per cent school attendance in a five-week period become eligible to join the Academic Success Guarantee for the next five weeks.

Once a student qualifies, parents are invited to discuss the guarantee. If accepted, a contract is signed by the parents and principal. The guarantee then becomes a commitment between the school and parent/s — the school commits to ensuring the student achieves their year-level standard and the parents commit to maintaining at least 95 per cent school attendance for their child for the following five weeks.

The school received the Australian Government Minister’s Award for Excellence in Teaching and School Leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in December 2012.

Key initiatives for 2013–16

- **Pilot a guarantee of academic success from Prep to Year 12 across a range of locations as a parent-school partnership approach to drive expectations and performance and to individually case manage students’ attendance and achievement.** This guarantee is a commitment between the parents/caregivers and the school that communicates the following expectations:
  - for parents — if you want your child(ren) to be successful, send them to school
  - for teaching and classroom support staff (teachers and teacher aides) — if students come to school then you must do whatever it takes to make them successful
  - for administrators — it means supporting teachers, parents and kids by doing whatever it takes to ensure success.

- **Produce a kit of resources such as fact sheets, vignettes and case studies to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents to support their children’s attainment, attendance and engagement in school.** Initial resources will focus on:
  - supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to make smooth transitions, particularly when Year 7 joins high school in 2015
  - forming a school-community partnership
  - consultative decision making in schools.

- **Hold seven youth forums across Queensland to provide greater opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and young people to have a say in the type of services they receive, how they are provided and how they can be made more responsive to local needs.**

- **Implement learning partnerships between the Department of Education, Training and Employment’s (DETE) Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres and local Traditional Owner groups for the purpose of:**
  (i) recognising the culture and history of Traditional Owner groups through practical measures like Welcome to Country, and signage and (ii) embedding their local traditional culture and knowledges within environmental sustainability learning programs.

- **Introduce a targeted program to ensure that all students achieving a high level of literacy and numeracy in Year 3 are supported to reach their full potential by monitoring their attendance and achievement and intervening with targeted support until they complete Year 12.**

- **Implement a case management program to monitor and support the needs of children in out-of-home care by monitoring their achievement and attendance and intervening with targeted support when required.**

- **Increase access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching and learning resources by creating a network of**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource centres linked to DETE’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library.

• Make available modules to higher education institutions to implement within their pre-service teacher education programs for graduate teachers to develop strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and build their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture.

• Support final year pre-service teachers electing to teach in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community schools to undertake specific training to equip them with the knowledge, cultural awareness and capability to live and teach in these communities.

• Implement professional learning and an online resource to enable teachers to effectively support the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students who speak English as an additional language or dialect.

• Continue the Transition Support Service (TSS) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote communities to access secondary education in urban and regional locations.

TRANSITION SUPPORT SERVICE (TSS)

Funded by the Department of Education, Training and Employment, TSS supports remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families in their transition to, and through, secondary schooling.

Students who graduate from remote primary schools on Cape York, the Northern Peninsula Area and the Torres Strait often have to leave their home communities in order to attend secondary school. These students and their families encounter unique challenges and opportunities.

The TSS helps students and their families to manage transition related challenges and to develop opportunities through two streams of service:

• Within the community, a Community Support Officer (CSO) works to prepare and support students and their families to select, apply to and transfer to a secondary school that “best fits” the needs and resources of each student.

• At major regional centres, a Transition Support Officer (TSO) meets students weekly at their secondary schools to help them orientate to their new schools and community and to remain enrolled until they complete Year 12.
Phase 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make a successful transition from school to training, further study or into employment.

Evidence shows that young people who do not complete Year 12 or equivalent are less likely to have the same opportunities as those who do. Education leads to employment and economic independence. Education forms the basis for intergenerational change by providing individuals with the skills to participate fully in society and work and to determine their own futures. School achievement and career aspirations are two significant factors in completing high school and undertaking further study or training. The private, corporate, business, industry and not-for-profit sectors play an important role in creating employment opportunities and pathways from school to work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They also play an important role in mentoring students in school, career development and assist with developing students’ skills base that is relevant to industry and employment.

“We need to be grooming the students to build careers, not to just gain a job. Allow them to dream big and then put them in a plan and a support network that can help the student achieve that outcome. The support to students post-school graduation is essential.”

(Submission)
Key initiatives for 2013–16

• Introduce transition to further study or employment programs which will provide students with opportunities to be mentored and supported by private and public employers into employment or further study opportunities by:
  – having a single point of contact for employers to help them link with schools
  – establishing an online portal that shares information to all partners and provides direction and highlights priorities for investment
  – incorporating student employment opportunities into statewide industry employment agreements giving students access to employment growth areas
  – incorporating employers into the development and monitoring of student employment programs ensuring the employment opportunities are relevant to the market.
  – providing opportunities for employers to engage with schools and students to inform students of career paths or employment options
  – continuing the Year 12 Destinations initiative, which focuses on assisting Year 12 students to transition into further education, training or employment, and expanding the individual case management of students from six months to 12 months post-Year 12
  – continuing to implement aspirations and university linkage programs to increase tertiary enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  – linking students and schools to available scholarships.
Phase 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make a successful transition from training or further study into employment.

Labour market data shows there is a direct link between a person’s post-school qualification and their quality of life. Vocational Education and Training (VET), with its focus on applied learning and strong connections with labour market skill requirements, provides real opportunities for employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The VET system delivers employment-related skills across a wide range of vocations. It provides Australians with the skills to enter or re-enter the labour force, retrain for a new job or upgrade skills for an existing job. It allows for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to increase their involvement with the economy through real jobs, business opportunities, economic independence and wealth creation.

“Apprenticeships and traineeships present an ideal pathway for Indigenous Queenslanders to build the necessary job-ready and industry-specific skills that match the needs of employers and industry, while training in an environment characterised by mentoring and support.”

(Submission)
Key initiatives for 2013–16

• Implement training strategies for all communities which link to local employment and business development opportunities through:
  − a new VET investment framework
  − working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and employers to identify skills required, so that individuals acquire skills that lead directly to jobs.

• Implement strategies that increase Certificate I to Advanced Diploma qualification completions by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:
  − providing concessional fees for qualifications under the new VET Investment Framework including the Certificate 3 Guarantee program.

• Extend the Queensland Indigenous Business Gateway project (also known as the Black Business Finder website) to focus on business development activities and access to supply chain opportunities.

Black Business Finder

The Black Business Finder assists major project operators in mining, construction, agriculture and tourism source goods and services from more than 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses helping them to benefit from the rapidly expanding major project program currently underway in Queensland.

www.bbf.org.au
Communication, transparency and accountability

The Queensland Government is ultimately responsible for leading *Solid partners Solid futures*. As with any partnership approach, it is important there is feedback to, among, and from all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.

A number of issues were raised during the consultations including the need to monitor performance against key indicators, ensure there is strong leadership and governance, and importantly make people accountable for achieving outcomes. Additionally, forums and processes to ensure ongoing stakeholder consultation and communication were identified as being needed throughout planning and implementation phases. Performance monitoring, management and accountability processes need to be embedded in ways that are sustainable, accepted as routine, transparent, and highly visible. As partners, we will establish regular consultations and communications to enable partners and stakeholders to assess progress of *Solid partners Solid futures*.

**Key initiatives for 2013–16**

- Hold an annual forum with key partners including the QIECC, Queensland and Australian government agencies, education providers (from early childhood education to schooling and tertiary education), business and industry to:
  - ensure there is ongoing communication and feedback about the progress of *Solid partners Solid futures*; and
  - showcase the progress made against the strategic directions and actions contained in *Solid partners Solid futures*.

- Produce an annual report against key performance indicators and undertake ongoing evaluation to assess the overall effectiveness of *Solid partners Solid futures* and inform development of the next four-year plan from 2017 to 2020. Some of the key indicators against which we will assess our performance will include:
  - improved participation and access to early childhood education
  - improved outcomes and attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
  - improved retention and transitions
  - increased workforce skills
  - improved employment outcomes.

“*In creating meaningful partnerships, government needs to create a strong, consistent and long-term presence with relevant stakeholders, this includes regular communication.*”

(Submission)

“In creating meaningful partnerships, government needs to create a strong, consistent and long-term presence with relevant stakeholders, this includes regular communication.”

(Submission)

“Consultation with parents, Elders and community is critical if true partnerships are to be established.”

(Submission)
Artwork by: Josiah Omeenyo
Agent: Lockhart River Arts Indigenous Corporation
Josiah Omeenyo is a cultural leader in his community and an accomplished traditional dancer and singer. His art work expresses his enthusiasm for life. Josiah is represented by major galleries both in Australia and Overseas.