



# St Joseph's Catholic School

Queenstown

## Aboriginal Studies

### RATIONALE

In April 1989, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education met as the Australian Education Council in Hobart. Ministers made an historic commitment to improving Australian schooling within a framework of national collaboration by reaching agreement to address the areas of common concern embodied in the ten Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia. The ten Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia were released as part of **The Hobart Declaration (1989)** on Schooling. Recommendations explicitly focusing on Aboriginal studies that are found in this declaration are:

*7. To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context.*

*8. To provide students with an understanding and respect for our cultural heritage including the particular cultural background of Aboriginal and ethnic groups.*

The document that directs schools in forming teaching and learning programs that emerged from the Hobart Declaration, *Australia's Common and Agreed*

*National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century*, expects that schooling should be socially just, and should ensure that:

- *Outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students improve and match more closely those of other students*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access, participation and outcomes*
- *All students have understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures to achieve reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians*
- *All students have the knowledge, cultural understandings and skills which respect individual's freedom to celebrate languages and cultures within a socially cohesive framework of shared values.*

## **AIM**

The Aboriginal people are a unique group within Australia. They are the original owners of the continent, living and representing our cultural heritage quite distinct from all others. The treatment, therefore, of Aboriginal Studies within our school should be that of developing and teaching programs of historical and contemporary importance and social distinctiveness.

To ensure that Aboriginal Studies is at all times developed and taught in an informative and effective way, St Joseph's Catholic School understands and commits to implementing policy that is responsible for the formulation and

evaluation of the curriculum by direct input and active consultation.

To realize this commitment, St Joseph's Catholic School expects classroom curriculum will include teaching and learning outcomes, which should encompass:

1. The lifestyles and cultural heritage of Tasmanian Aborigines today;
2. The traditional cultural heritage and lifestyles of Tasmanian Aborigines;
3. The nature and effects of the culture clash arising from the European invasion, and the different aspects of racism towards Aboriginal people;
4. The lifestyles and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in other parts of Australia.

St Joseph's Catholic School believes that Aboriginal Studies must form an integral part of every student's education. This would lead to an understanding and appreciation by all students of the contemporary cultural heritage and lifestyle of Tasmanian Aborigines, as well as the history and traditional aspects of Tasmanian Aboriginal history. Aboriginal Studies should be introduced across the curriculum as well as a separate subject. Through Aboriginal Studies students should acquire an accurate knowledge of Aborigines.

Aboriginal Studies should always focus on the locality in which it is being taught. This must involve active consultation with, and direct input from, the local Aboriginal community.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Appoint and support a Key teacher: Aboriginal Perspectives whose role will be primarily concerned with the support and promotion of Aboriginal Perspectives in the school who will assist teachers to write and implement appropriate learning sequences.
- Ensure the school's curriculum includes elements that reflect outcomes that clearly and unambiguously accord with MCEETYA *Statements Of Learning* for one or more key learning area. To this end, incorporate Aboriginal Studies using a holistic approach that encompasses ***land, language & culture*** in the context of ***time, place & relationships***.
- Develop and maintain resources for the support of the teaching and learning of Aboriginal Studies.
- Recognising the role of Aboriginal people as custodians of the land by commencing assemblies, both staff and student, with acknowledging prayers and reflections.
- Endeavour to ensure that appropriate terminology, regarding Aboriginal perspectives, is demonstrated to ensure Aboriginal culture is respected and valued.
- Ensure the Aboriginal flag is flown alongside the Australian flag on a daily basis.

## REFERENCES

*Koorie education* (2002). State of Victoria (Department of Education & Training)

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/koorie/curric.htm#policy>

*Australia's Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century*

- *A Review of the 1989 Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in Australia*

(The 'Hobart Declaration') - *A Discussion Paper*. (May 1998). MCEETYA.

<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11578>

*This policy and associated practices will be reviewed as part of the  
St Joseph's Catholic School policy review cycle.*

**Implemented March 2008; reviewed February 2010**