

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY

MAY 2013

A journey together towards reconciliation, hope and education



TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES

*“Remove the sandals from your feet for
the place on which you are standing is
holy ground.”*

EXODUS 3:4-6

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle acknowledges that the lands encompassed by its boundaries are:

Awabakal

Biripi

Darkijung

Gamilaroi

Wiradjuri

Worimi

Wonnarua

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Inspired by the message and example of Jesus Christ, Catholic schools live out a distinctive educational vision. Supported by the Catholic community of which they are a vital part, they invite students and their families into a faith-filled educational experience.

As a key ministry of parishes and the diocese, Catholic schools encourage and support parents in their responsibility for the faith formation of their children. This formation is supported by prayer and opportunities to participate in the life, mission and liturgy of the broader Catholic community.

Our schools commit to:

- nurturing each individual's growth in faith and unique potential
- offering outstanding educational experiences founded on Catholic values
- fostering partnership between parents and staff in the education of their children
- creating communities of respect for each other, the wider society and the earth
- encouraging active engagement in social justice issues, the service of others and the promotion of peace.

Catholic schools are part of a long tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in Australia and this diocese for over 180 years. They fulfil parents' rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own values, beliefs and hopes.

DOCUMENT SUMMARY	
Document Number	PO-DO0027.05
Responsible Officer	Head of Teaching and Learning Services
Effective Date	May 2013
Superseded Docs	Aboriginal Education Policy (2002)
Review Date	April 2016
School Actions	School Policy – Each school is to develop its own policy consistent with and aligned to the principles and practices outlined in the system policy.
Associated Documents	Pastoral Care Policy; Classroom Teaching of Religion Policy

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

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ARTWORK

The artwork on the cover features designs by artist Terry Johnstone and Sr Dorothy Woodward RSJ.

Terry is a member of the Forster Aboriginal community. His design was first featured at a diocesan principals' conference in 1999. The six outer circles represent six extended family groups representing the six school regions of the Diocese. The larger inner circle represents the meeting place where the groups meet every three to four years to perform ceremonies. The kidney shapes represent people sitting on the ground at the ceremonies. The ceremonies are to renew spiritual ties with the creator and to mother earth.

Sr Dorothy Woodward was invited to add to the design with the depiction of a cross and mountain which encompass the whole of the Diocese.

1. FOREWORD

A Message from our Bishop

Reading this Policy has been instructive in that it charts the development of values and principles relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

It identifies the address of Pope John Paul II to Aboriginal people in Alice Springs (1986) and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Apology to the Stolen Generations (2008) as key stepping stones in a developing understanding of the community's responsibilities towards, and debt to, Indigenous people. I am always reassured when a policy is reviewed and reissued, for it demonstrates a recognition that imagination must always trump complacency.

I am confident that with sound pedagogy, an accurate grasp of the past and a desire for the brightest future, the implementation of this reinvigorated policy will bring renewed enthusiasm for and commitment to effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.



Most Reverend William Wright

BISHOP OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

A Message from our Director of Schools

Outside St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Adelaide is a sculpture depicting St Mary of the Cross MacKillop walking hand in hand with two children, one a young girl most likely of European descent, the second a young Aboriginal boy. It is a sculpture that has been widely acclaimed. The presence of the Aboriginal boy highlights the fact that indigenous students have been enrolled in Catholic schools since the early days of the system of Catholic schools. In some cases schools were established in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and in others students attended Catholic schools as a result of the Stolen Generation policies.

Aboriginal students, teachers, Aboriginal Education Workers and families continue to play an important role in the life of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland. Enrolment trends in the last few years indicate that this diocese has experienced some of the largest growth in the enrolment of Aboriginal students in Catholic schools across Australia.

This Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy is an important step in ensuring that the Catholic Schools Office and our Catholic schools provide a quality education experience for our Aboriginal students, that Aboriginal perspectives are taught across the curriculum and that Aboriginal elders and communities are able to play an important role in the schools in which their children are a vital part.

I commend this policy to you.



Ray Collins

DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

2. PREAMBLE

In his 1986 address to Aboriginal people in Alice Springs Pope John Paul II stated,

The Church of Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you (the Aboriginal peoples of Australia) have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.

CEC NSW 2009

He went on to say,

For thousands of years this culture of yours was free to grow without interference by people from other places. You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes, waterholes, rivers, hills and mountains. Through your closeness to the land you touched the sacredness of the man's relationship with God, for the land was proof of a power in life greater than yourselves. You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it, and then walk away from it. You realised that your land was related to the source of life.

The silence of the Bush taught you a quietness of soul that put you in touch with another world, the world of God's Spirit. Your careful attention to the details of kinship spoke of your reverence for birth, life and human generation. You knew that children need to be loved, to be full of joy. They need a time to grow in laughter and to play, secure in the knowledge that they belong to their people.

You have a great respect for the need which people have for law, as a guide to living fairly with each other. So you created a legal system – very strict it is true – but closely adapted to the country in which you lived your lives. It made your society orderly. It was one of the reasons you survived in this land.

John Paul II Alice Springs 1986 – No.12

In their 2006 Statement, *The Heart of our Country, Dignity and Justice for our Indigenous Sisters and Brothers*, the Australian Bishops have confirmed the Pope's call, and, more recently, in the NSW & ACT Bishops' Pastoral Letter, (2007) *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads*, in which they challenge all to recommit to Catholic schooling in the twenty-first century.

In 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd moved a motion of Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples with specific reference to the Stolen Generations. He offered a broad apology for their 'profound grief, suffering and loss and to reconcile the past with the future in the true spirit of reconciliation.' The Apology also looked forward, heralding a renewed and united effort to close the gap between 'indigenous and non-indigenous Australians in life expectancy, educational achievements and economic opportunity.' Since then the Commonwealth Government's Council Of Australian Government (COAG) 2008 'closing the gap' reform agenda has embodied a new approach to Aboriginal education.

In 2013, on the five-year anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generations, the Commonwealth Government passed legislation to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Australian Constitution which will 'enrich the nation's identity, making it an inclusive one that reflects both the 'old' and the 'new' Australians.'

"Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the nation's foundational document will redress a history of exclusion, and have the concrete impact of recognising us as Australia's indigenous peoples within the nation's governance."

(Australian Human Rights Commission 2011)

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy 2013* has evolved from and builds upon the Diocesan 2002 Policy. It is informed by these key events, the national agenda and relevant documents. These include the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008), the National Education Agreement, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (MCEECDYA 2010-2014) and the Smarter Schools National Partnerships and Closing the Gap programs (2009-) to accelerate improvements in the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

3. RATIONALE

"Aboriginal students enter school from a social and cultural context that is quite different from the social and cultural context of the teacher." (Schwab & Sutherland, 2001) However while such differences make the experience of teaching and learning more complex, it is not made impossible. *"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.... are just as hungry to learn as any other child."* (Two Way Teaching and Learning p108)

Aboriginal students across Australia do not presently achieve education outcomes at similar levels to other Australian students. There is an urgent need to promote the educational achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enable them to participate fully and equitably in Australian society. Nationally agreed literacy and numeracy benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7 represent minimum standards of performance. Currently by Year 3 there is already a significant gap between the literacy levels of Aboriginal students and other Australian students. While some progress has been made in recent years, gaps in some areas are not closing but widening.

For Aboriginal students to reach their potential, it is important to recognise the role of Aboriginal parents as the first educators of their children and to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in the educational process. Cultural knowledge and personal histories are invaluable resources in promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their histories, culture, spirituality and languages. Seeking advice and assistance from the local community, in particular with Aboriginal elders, is important when planning, implementing and evaluating programs.

A Curriculum that is truly Australian should provide opportunities for all students to develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal heritage, cultures, contemporary issues and spirituality, and promote high expectations of Aboriginal students through quality teaching and learning opportunities.

Chris Sarra (2005) believes that the key strategies for ensuring success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are:

- Challenging, developing and embracing a positive sense of Indigenous student identity
- Embracing Indigenous leadership in schools and school communities
- High expectations

This Policy is underpinned by the Vision for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle particularly the hopes for diocesan schools to recognise the individuality and dignity of each young person, and foster the development of each one's unique potential and spirituality. (Living Waters 2010)

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* has been developed to support schools to be aspirational in their work towards achieving key strategies including:

- improving and celebrating educational outcomes and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- developing links with Aboriginal families and communities
- understanding and appreciating the significant issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their aspirations
- developing the knowledge, appreciation and understanding of staff, students and school communities about Aboriginal Australia
- supporting Aboriginal heritage, culture and spirituality
- supporting the Catholic Church's commitment to social justice.

4. DEFINITIONS

IDENTITY

There are complexities associated with the identity or background of an Aboriginal person in some areas or regions in Australia. Schools must be aware of the diversity within their communities and the complexities in their relationships with Aboriginal families.

Throughout this Policy, the definition of an Aboriginal person by the Federal Government, as defined by the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983), is a person who:

- Is of Aboriginal descent
- Identifies as an Aboriginal person
- Is accepted as such by the community in which they live.

All of these things must apply. A person's physical appearance or the way they live are not requirements. To learn more go to the anti-discrimination board website: http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/adb/ll_adb.nsf/pages/adb_who

“Being Aboriginal has nothing to do with the colour of your skin or the shape of your nose. It is a Spiritual feeling, an identity you know in your heart. It is a unique feeling that may be difficult for non-Aboriginal people to understand.”

Linda Burney, President of the AECG Inc 1994

ABORIGINAL

As the majority of this Diocese is located in the nations of Awabakal, Biripi, Darkijung, Gamilaroi, Wiradjuri, Worimi, Wonnarua peoples, and unless quoted otherwise, the term Aboriginal will be used throughout this Policy.

5. AIMS

Underpinned by the spirit of reconciliation, this Policy aims to provide guidance, support and challenge for the wider diocesan community, the Catholic Schools Office and its system of schools, and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

It provides a framework for schools to develop their own policies and practices around the following National Strategic Priorities.

5.1 ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY

To understand Aboriginal Spirituality we need to know what the word spirituality means. Spirituality comes from the Latin word ‘*spirare*’ and this means ‘*to breathe life into*’. Spirituality comes from our own belief that there is a power greater than ourselves, Biامي, and our faith in this is lived out through our culture, cultural expressions and our strong relationship to our land. This sense of Mystery is passed on through the stories and passion of land as eloquently said by well-known performer Archie Roach, singer/songwriter as he remembers a time when he and his wife Ruby Hunter visited a northern Queensland town to talk to the children,

‘I remember talking about connection to country.....and the sharing of stories is an important part of the passing down. Your story is not just your story but everyone’s story. It belongs to your grandfathers and your grandmothers. It is connected through the years and years and from the oldest to the youngest and from the seen and the unseen. It’s important to know and keep that, because it then becomes not only your story but also the story of those generations to come. We want to feel not just loved by the country we endear but we want to endear all people to the land and how much we love the land and those spirits that live within.’

- a. To foster a deeper understanding of Aboriginal spirituality within staff.
- b. To promote a deeper sense of identity within students.

5.2 READINESS FOR SCHOOL

- a. To encourage the enrolment of Aboriginal students by promoting Catholic schools as a genuine option for Aboriginal families.
- b. To develop effective Diocesan and school practices that are mindful of Aboriginal approaches to education and knowledge.
- c. To develop and support transition and early intervention programs.
- d. To be familiar with the demographic and trends of the community in which a school is located for enrolment.
- e. To acknowledge the learning a child brings to school and develop suitable programs to address student needs (‘prior to school learning’ NSW Board of Studies Syllabuses 2012).

5.3 ENGAGEMENT, CONNECTIONS AND ATTENDANCE

- a. To develop and promote knowledge and understandings about Aboriginal Australia by providing culturally inclusive curricula that respects traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture, appropriate protocols and spirituality and Aboriginal history.
- b. To provide opportunities for members of school communities to enhance their appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture and spirituality.
- c. To recognise, value and respect the role of Aboriginal families and communities by active involvement in school life and in the education of their children.

- d. To maintain high expectations regarding the overall attendance patterns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

5.4 LITERACY AND NUMERACY

- a. To provide quality Catholic education underpinned by high expectations that support Aboriginal students in developing to their potential.
- b. To assist schools to set targets for Aboriginal students' achievement in the higher bands of National Assessment Program in Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN).
- c. To be familiar with and implement pedagogical approaches which acknowledge different learning needs of Aboriginal students.

5.5 LEADERSHIP, QUALITY TEACHING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- a. To support and encourage leaders and educators in the Catholic community to journey with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to work towards Reconciliation through quality teaching and workforce development.
- b. To provide professional development which enhances the knowledge and understanding of all staff about "contemporary Aboriginal society as well as Aboriginal society prior to European settlement, and during the period of contact with Europeans" (Catholic Education Commission, NSW, 1998).
- c. To provide professional learning opportunities which build the capacity of staff to enhance their awareness, confidence, competence and appreciation of Aboriginal culture.
- d. To identify the schools and communities with significant enrolment needs and support them with appropriate resources - human, financial and material.
- e. To look for appropriate opportunities to include Aboriginal personnel in decision-making processes and discussions concerning relevant issues.
- f. To endeavour to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in various roles in schools and the Catholic Schools Office.
- g. To encourage schools to include Aboriginal personnel in processes for decision-making and discussions concerning relevant issues.

5.6 PATHWAYS TO REAL POST-SCHOOL OPTIONS

- a. To include in existing structures the opportunities to encourage and support Aboriginal school leavers and employees with training and development.
- b. To encourage school leavers (Yr12) and Aboriginal staff with the provision of scholarships to support them in teacher education training.
- c. To support Vocational Education & Training (VET) pathways for Aboriginal students.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1.1 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Staffing and Resourcing

- a. Employ an Aboriginal Education Officer to support staff and schools with strategies and programs, professional development, spirituality, perspectives across the curriculum and liaison with the Aboriginal community.
- b. Employ Aboriginal Education Teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers to support students and schools in areas of curriculum, culture, spirituality and welfare.
- c. Expend allocated funds strategically to assist those schools in particular areas of the Diocese that may need it most for staffing and resources.
- d. Plan for the resourcing of professional development, training and community engagement opportunities.

Roles

- a. Ensure roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal Education Teachers (AETs) and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs), are current by consulting with AETs, AEWs, principals and relevant CSO staff, and made known to other staff and schools.

Networks and Consultation

- a. Provide networking opportunities for AEW's and AETs to meet at least once a year to participate in professional development, to discuss and share roles and responsibilities, school and Diocesan initiatives, and contemporary information.
- b. Establish an Aboriginal Education Standing Committee to meet up to twice a year to provide reflection, monitoring and feedback on the implementation of this Policy.
- c. Continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal families and the wider community and look for opportunities for reconciliation and acknowledgement.
- d. Increase involvement of Aboriginal parents and community members in various opportunities including in educational decision making processes such as inclusion on interview panels as appropriate, and in cultural awareness programs for staff.
- e. Promote the roles of Aboriginal elders as custodians of the land by including them in significant cultural and spiritual celebrations and events.

Teaching and Learning

- a. Assist schools to improve literacy and numeracy standards for Aboriginal students.
- b. Assist schools to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal students by striving to improve attendance and retention rates.
- c. Employ Aboriginal persons to assist in the implementation of Aboriginal Education programs and initiatives in schools.
- d. Assist schools to engage with opportunities that give students experience of the beliefs and value systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW Board of Studies Syllabuses (2012), English, History, Maths and Science in the cross-curriculum area, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

Professional Development & Training

- a. Provide professional development opportunities for schools to enhance understandings about and appreciation of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture, protocols and spirituality.
- b. Provide professional development for staff in relation to building confidence, competence and capacity.
- c. Support school leavers (Yr 12) and Aboriginal staff with the provision of scholarships in teacher training programs.

6.1.2 SCHOOLS

Based on the aims of this policy, schools should develop their policy and practices around the following:

Policy

- a. Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy based on this Diocesan Policy which indicates specific strategies and procedures.

Signs, Symbols & Celebrations

- a. For schools to identify, name and acknowledge their place in Country:
 - Display acknowledgement of Country in a prominent place in the school
 - Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags alongside the Australian flag on the school premises
 - Include in sacred spaces symbols of the heritage and culture of Aboriginal people relevant to that community
 - Include an Acknowledgement of Country or, where appropriate, Welcome to Country at assemblies and other school functions
 - Celebrate special occasions during the year, for example, Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day, Harmony Day, Indigenous Literacy Week and NAIDOC Week
 - Network with other schools in the region to plan and celebrate special events.

Teaching & Learning

- a. Provide safe and supportive learning environments which enhance the self-esteem and cultural identity of Aboriginal students.
- b. Provide curriculum, teaching and assessment programs which are challenging, have high expectations and are culturally appropriate.
- c. Ensure that there is evidence of Aboriginal cross-curriculum perspectives in teachers' programs.
- d. Provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures
- e. Provide adequate, contemporary and relevant resources for staff and students to support teaching and learning.
- f. Provide intensive literacy and numeracy support for Aboriginal students where needed
- g. Encourage and support staff to develop knowledge and understanding of the education and cultural needs of Aboriginal students.
- h. To develop Individual Plans and Personalised Learning Plans, as needed, for Aboriginal students.
- i. Provide teachers with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to meet appropriate AITSL National Professional Standards for Teachers (1.4 and 2.4)

Networks and Consultation

- a. Continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal families and the wider community and look for opportunities for reconciliation and acknowledgement.
- b. Increase involvement of Aboriginal parents and community members in educational decision-making processes especially in the development of Individual or Personalised Learning Plans for students, inclusion on interview panels as appropriate, (for example in schools with significant enrolments of Aboriginal students), and cultural awareness programs.
- c. Encourage networking for Aboriginal Education Teachers and Workers in their local area.
- d. Encourage schools to seek membership of Dare to Lead (DTL) and undertake a school 'snapshot' of the needs within their schools in responding to the needs of Aboriginal students.

Roles

- a. Ensure roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal Education Teachers (AETs) and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) are relevant and made known to other staff and the community
- b. Develop and support AETs and AEWs to progress professionally in their roles
- c. Ensure there is professional respect and support for all staff in their roles
- d. Invite AETs and AEWs to speak about their heritage and identity as part of staff and community cultural awareness programs
- e. Involve Aboriginal parents and community members in educational decision-making especially in the development of Individual Plans (IPs).
- f. Encourage schools to identify a contact person on staff in relation to Aboriginal education.

Professional Development & Training

- a. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to enhance understandings, knowledge, awareness and appreciation of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture, protocols and spirituality
- b. Support all staff through focused professional development to know and understand how they may be able to contribute to making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal students
- c. Provide professional development for AETs and AEWs in relation to building confidence, competence and capacity.

7. BUDGET

The Catholic Schools Office supports Aboriginal Education as part of its commitment to the provision of inclusive education. Additional funding is received each year from the Catholic Education Commission through the Aboriginal Student Assistance Program (CASAP) to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. This funding is expended together with recurrent and other relevant commonwealth or state program funds in the following ways:

- a. Employment of staff, with preference given to Aboriginal people in the relevant roles in schools and at the CSO
- b. Assistance with the provision of training and professional development opportunities
- c. Assistance with celebration of significant events and purchase of resources
- d. Provision of scholarships to school leavers for teacher training (two per year)
- e. Offer some support to schools when undertaking a Dare to Lead school 'snapshot.'

Oversight and monitoring of the budget for this area is provided by the Head of Teaching and Learning Services, together with the CSO Aboriginal Education Officer and personnel in Financial Services.

8. EVALUATION

The policy will be evaluated in the following ways:

- a. Ongoing collection of data by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) as part of the accountability requirements for the funds through the Catholic Education Commission (CASAP) will be monitored by the CSO Aboriginal Education Officer. This data provides information on:
 - literacy and numeracy standards of Indigenous students
 - school attendance and retention rates
 - professional development initiatives and the implementation of culturally inclusive curriculum.
- b. The School Evaluation and Development process (SEVDEV) which is a way of providing feedback on a school's provision for Aboriginal students as part of their overall education.
- c. From data obtained by the CSO from schools on the Council of Australian Government (COAG) requirements, the annual Certificate of Education, and Dare to Lead school snapshots, as relevant.
- d. From the implementation by schools of this Policy and inclusive practices that should be evident and visible.
- e. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Education Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Aboriginal Education Standing Committee in consultation with stakeholders.

9. APPENDICES

Glossary

The appropriate use of Aboriginal terminology

The use of accurate and non-offensive language is an essential component of Aboriginal cultural respect and communication training www.health.nsw.gov.au

The Department of Health NSW is acknowledged for this section of the Policy. The Department has developed a Guide, 'Communicating Positively', outlining the appropriate use of terminology, relating to Aboriginal people in NSW, with some of the terms adopted and used here in this Policy. They advise the following:

- the usage of some terminology may vary with location
- if you are unsure about using a particular term, ask the local Aboriginal community/ies to identify their preferred terms.

ABORIGINE/ABORIGINAL

An 'Aboriginal person' or an 'Aborigine' is a person who:

- is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia
- identifies as an Aboriginal person
- is accepted by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal person.

Note: always capitalise the 'A' in 'Aboriginal' as you would other designations like 'Australian', 'Arabic' or 'Nordic'. The word 'aboriginal' with a lowercase 'a' refers to an indigenous person from any part of the world. As such, it does not necessarily refer to the Aboriginal people of Australia.

COUNTRY

'Country' is a term used to describe a culturally defined area of land associated with a particular, culturally distinct group of people or nation. For example, Newcastle is in Awabakal country.

CULTURE

'Culture' consists of 'accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving'. It is a common understanding shared by the members of a group or community. It includes land, beliefs and spirituality, language, ways of living and working, artistic expression, relationships and identity.

ELDER

The traditional meaning of an Aboriginal Elder is someone who has gained recognition within their community as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose cultural knowledge and beliefs. Recognised Elders are highly respected people within Aboriginal communities. In some instances, Aboriginal people above a certain age will refer to themselves as Elders. However, it is important to understand that in traditional Aboriginal culture, age alone does not necessarily mean that one is a recognised Elder.

GOORI /KOORI /MURRI /NUNGA AND OTHER SUCH TERMS

These terms are directly derived from Aboriginal languages and are the names used by Aboriginal people in specific areas when referring to themselves. Note that many Aboriginal people from other areas of Australia reside within NSW and still use their traditional names. Some examples of these terms are:

- Goori** is usually used by Aboriginal people in northern NSW coastal regions
- Koori** is usually used by Aboriginal people in parts of NSW and Victoria

Murri	is usually used by Aboriginal people in north-west NSW and Queensland
Nunga	is usually used by Aboriginal people in South Australia
Yolngu	is usually used by Aboriginal people in Northern Territory (north- east Arnhem Land)
Anangu	is usually used by Aboriginal people in Central Australia
Noongar	is usually used by Aboriginal people in south-west Western Australia

MOB

'Mob' is a term identifying a group of Aboriginal people associated with a particular place or country. 'Mob' is generally used by Aboriginal people and between Aboriginal people. Therefore, it may not be appropriate for non-Aboriginal people to use this term unless this is known to be acceptable to Aboriginal people.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

A Torres Strait Islander or a Torres Strait Islander person is a person/descendant from the Torres Strait Islands which are located to the north of mainland Australia. Note that although not originally from NSW, there are Torres Strait Islander people living in the state.

TRADITIONAL OWNER

'Traditional owner(s)' is an Aboriginal person or group of Aboriginal people directly descended from the original Aboriginal inhabitants of a culturally defined area of land or country, and has a cultural association with this country that derives from the traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the area.

Original Peoples of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Many attempts have been made to establish traditional Aboriginal boundaries and most of these studies have been in the contemporary setting. However, the exact boundaries in many instances will never be known.

AWABAKAL (Awabagal)

The territory of the **Awabakal** covers the area between the Hunter River and Tuggerah Lakes, NSW, including Lake Macquarie. They are neighbours with the **Kuring-gai** and **Darkinung** peoples to the south, the **Worimi** people to the north, and the **Wonnarua** people to the west (on the middle reaches of the Hunter River)

BIRIPI

The territory of the **Biripi** people includes the coastal regions of the Hasting and Manning Rivers. They are neighbours with **Daingatti**, **Worimi** and **Dharug** and **Wiradjuri** peoples.

DARKINUNG (Darkinjung)

The boundaries of the **Darkinung** stretches from Wilberforce and Wiseman's Ferry on the Hawkesbury River to Jerry's Plains and Singleton on the Hunter. They are neighbours with the **Wonnarua**, **Awabakal**, **Kuringai**, **Dharug** and **Wiradjuri** peoples.

GAMILAROI (Kamilaroi)

The Gamilaroi people are situated in the areas around the Liverpool ranges, the whole of the upper Hunter Valley and both sides of its major tributary the Goulburn River. The topographical centre lay at present day Denman. The Biami Cave at Mibrodale is also a significant landmark of the Aboriginal groups affiliated with the Hunter Valley.

WIRADJURI

The Wiradjuri peoples are those that neighboured the Wonnarua, Gamilaroi and the Awabakal. Their landmarks include, Biami Cave at Milbrodale, the three rivers of Macquarie, Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee. Some towns include, Mudgee and Cassilis and a line drawn between the both.

WORIMI

The **Worimi** people occupy the territory south of the Wallamba River to the Hunter River including the Port Stephens area. They are neighbours to the **Biripi**, **Awabakal** and **Wonnarua** peoples.

WONNARUA (Wonnaruah)

Wonnarua are inland people, living on the middle reaches of the Hunter River including Singleton and Muswellbrook. They are neighbours to **Awabakal**, **Darkinung** and **Worimi** peoples to the south and east, the **Geawegal**, **Gamilaroi** to the north and the **Wiradjuri** peoples to the west of the mountains

It is acknowledged that residing within our Diocese are Aboriginal people from other countries that may not be mentioned here.

Policy Committee 2012

Sr Pat Adams	Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Louise Campbell	Aboriginal Education Officer CSO
Vince Cooper	Aboriginal Education Teacher St Joseph's Aberdeen
Jim Dempsey	Principal St Clare's HS Taree
Kathryn Fox (Chair)	Head of Teaching & Learning Services CSO
Bernadette Gibson	Principal Our Lady of Lourdes PS Tarro
Tony Kelly	Principal San Clemente HS Mayfield
Susan Macleod	Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Linda McNeill	Parent Resources Officer Federation of Parents & Friends
Mark Mowbray	Principal Holy Name PS Forster
Barbara Myers	Assistant Director CSO
Michael O'Brien	Head of Religious Education & Spirituality Services CSO
Denise Potts	Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Tracy Saunders	Aboriginal Education Worker St Joseph's PS Taree
Tammy Wright	Aboriginal Education Teacher St Mary's HS Gateshead