



# A School Review Checklist: Indicators of a successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Program

This School Review Checklist has been developed for school leaders.

The aim of the checklist is to assist leaders to review what is happening in their schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their education. This will enable schools to develop a strong strategic approach to overcoming the disproportionate educational disadvantage currently experienced by these students.

School leaders will find this resource valuable as they engage in the process of evaluating their achievements towards identified outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It will provide a framework for the accountability measures required by federal, state and territory jurisdictions, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The various components of this checklist will assist school leaders to engage in discussion around many of the current issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

It is strongly recommended that principals consult widely with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities before using this checklist or any of the strategies it suggests.

*Dare to Lead*

## Key for completing the checklist:

CD Currently doing

WO Working on

ND Not doing

WT Will try

Each school has its particular context, and will need to plan how to use the checklist in relation to its specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

This checklist could be completed by different groups within the school community.

For example, a principal might invite all, or some of the following groups to contribute to the completion of the checklist: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee; the whole staff; the executive; senior students; and most importantly, by Elders and community members.

The document may also be used as part of a school's professional development program. Please tick the boxes in the checklist to document how your school is faring in terms of strengthening its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education focus.

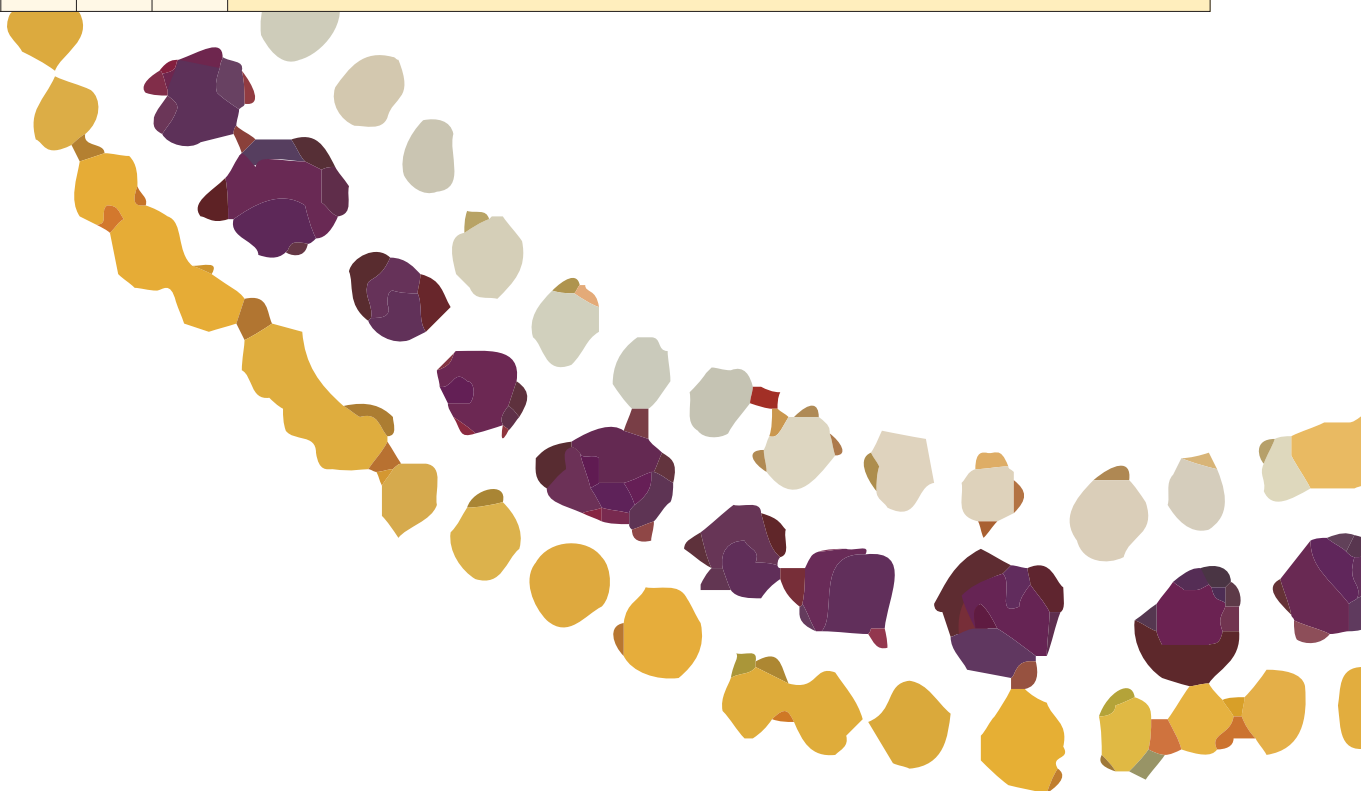
Schools may adapt and reproduce this document for their specific needs.

# 1. Acknowledging and celebrating

CD	WO	ND	WT	
				<b>1. Acknowledging and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia</b>
				a. We fly the Aboriginal flag
				b. We fly the Torres Strait Islander flag
				c. We Acknowledge Country at our school assemblies
				d. Our library includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material, and is available to all students
				e. We celebrate National Aboriginal and Torres Islander Celebrations (NAIDOC) week
				f. The school has accessed the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) Ambassador's program
				g. We have visited the <i>Dare to Lead</i> and <i>What Works</i> websites
				h. We invite our Elders to Welcome visitors to Country at significant events
				i. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers visit our school
				j. We provide the opportunity for children to learn traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance, music and art
				k. We have a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education cultural room
				l. We have examples of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural artifacts on display
				m. We have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander murals in the school

## 2. Building partnerships

CD	WO	ND	WT	2. Building and sustaining community school partnerships
				a. Classroom teachers meet with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' parents
				b. Parent meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents are held off the school site
				c. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee has community representatives
				d. Our school provides training and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members
				e. The school has made connections with local Elders
				f. The school is involved in activities within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
				g. We have Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members on our school Parents and Citizens organisation or equivalent
				h. Our school has representatives at local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and/or Indigenous Education Consultative Board meetings
				i. We have entered into a formal partnership agreement with our local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community



The checklist has been developed by *Dare to Lead* in collaboration with members of the *Dare to Lead* National Steering Committee, APAPDC National Coordinators and other key stakeholders.

# 3. Meeting individual needs

CD	WO	ND	WT	3. Meeting individual needs
				a. We track the literacy and numeracy outcomes of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
				b. We have an adult Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander presence in our classrooms, such as Aboriginal Education Workers working in partnership with teachers within the classroom
				c. We use a wide range of culturally diverse and appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching and learning materials
				d. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and themes are well represented in our teaching resources and curriculum implementation
				e. Teachers know who their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are, and understand the importance of their identity and family connections
				f. The school uses the model of in-class tuition/support to assist students below national benchmarks
				g. Teachers are aware of the individual learning needs and strengths of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and demonstrate this in their planning and teaching strategies. They have developed a variety of teaching strategies in order to give students access to other learning styles
				h. Our school is providing appropriate literacy support that will result in accelerated outcomes for individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
				i. Quality education programs are in place to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the pre-school years
				j. Our school provides intensive individual career skills development and counselling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
				k. We have individual learning programs for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
				l. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are represented in our Gifted and Talented programs
				m. Our school has medical screening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Otitis Media is addressed at an early stage in a student's school life
				n. Classrooms are set up for instruction of hearing impaired children. Children with such needs are individually microphoned
				o. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equal access to the <i>Reading Recovery</i> program
				p. The school celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student learning successes
				q. We track our mobile/transient students and provide receiving schools with appropriate information to ensure continuity of education programs
				r. We have used the <i>What Works</i> student profile and planning proformas
				s. Indigenous Tutoring Assistance Scheme is incorporated into the individual plans of students below national benchmarks

## 4. Strategic planning

CD	WO	ND	WT	4. Planning our teaching and learning
				a. We have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective in all curriculum areas
				b. Our school curriculum scope and sequence includes mandatory units based on both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures
				c. We run a series of transition programs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. For example, Pre school–School, Years 2–3, Years 6–7, Years 10–12
				d. The school has implemented an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language program
				e. The school has implemented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies for all students
				f. Teachers develop appropriate programs of work adapted to meet the individual needs of students
				g. We have visited the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs Unit website (state and sector-based)

## 5. Setting high expectations

CD	WO	ND	WT	5. Setting high expectations of our teaching and learning
				a. Teachers demonstrate a consistently high expectation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
				b. The school has open discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members to establish shared expectations of the teaching and learning focus of the classroom
				c. Students have high expectations and are challenged by the curriculum
				d. We have a specific targeted engagement program in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that can be measured through improved attendance
				e. We provide leadership opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
				f. We have an orientation program for prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinder/reception/pre-school enrolments
				g. We have narrowed the achievement gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in literacy and numeracy
				h. The school tracks the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across transition periods
				i. Teachers challenge individual students with programs that build on students' prior knowledge

# 6. Promoting understanding

CD	WO	ND	WT	6. Promoting cultural understanding
				a. We provide cultural competence training for all new staff members as part of their induction
				b. All staff undertake regular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural training and development
				c. We know the traditional land our school is built upon
				d. We know the traditional nation, language and local Indigenous groups that inhabited our local area
				e. All students study units of work on local history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
				f. We have invited local Elders to talk to staff about local history and cultures
				g. We participate in Reconciliation Week activities

# 7. Employing

CD	WO	ND	WT	7. Employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
				a. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are often at work in our school
				b. We have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employee in our front office
				c. We have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander teacher/teachers on staff
				d. We employ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff to work in non-designated positions
				e. All Aboriginal Education staff are provided with training and support

Key for completing the checklist:

CD Currently doing

WO Working on

ND Not doing

WT Will try

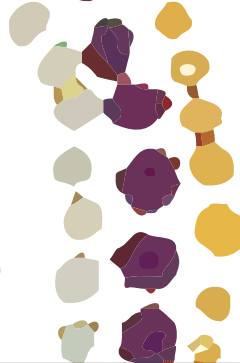
## 8. Leading

CD	WO	ND	WT	8. Leading
				a. We have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Committee that guides decision-making about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education matters within the school. The local community is represented on this committee
				b. The needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are reflected in the school's global fiscal planning
				c. School leaders and teachers have formed authentic relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and the local community
				d. Our school is an active member of the <i>Dare to Lead</i> coalition
				e. Our school has worked through the <i>What Works</i> program
				f. We have made close connections with other inter-agency partners that work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
				g. We have a strong and transparent anti-racism policy in action
				h. Meetings are held between the school leadership team and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
				i. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has a priority in our management plan
				j. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues are regular items on our staff meeting agenda
				k. <i>The APAPDC School Leadership frame: an Indigenous focus</i> booklet and other appropriate leadership materials have been discussed by our staff

## 9. Encouraging mentors and models

CD	WO	ND	WT	9. Encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors and role models
				a. The school has post tracked their graduates (into high school, tertiary education or the workforce)
				b. The school invites successful ex students and community members to provide motivation to our current students
				c. The school has used the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) Ambassador's Program
				d. The school has engaged the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to provide local role models and mentors for students

# 10. Promoting health and wellbeing



CD	WO	ND	WT	10. Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing
				a. We are a health promoting school
				b. We address local health priorities through relevant cohesive health education curricula e.g. drug education, road safety, sexual health, mental health, protective behaviours, nutrition
				c. Health and wellbeing education is supported by culturally appropriate resources
				d. The school promotes a positive environment that supports inclusivity and the building of student resilience (for example through implementation of programs such as <i>MindMatters</i> )
				e. The school has a regular physical activity/sport program
				f. Staff attend regular professional development in health and wellbeing
				g. The school implements policies that support the health and physical education curriculum and promote a healthy school environment (for example through <i>Healthy Canteen</i> policies)
				h. The school has a Health and Wellbeing Education Committee with representation from parents and other relevant community members such as Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers, local Elders and Aboriginal Health Workers
				i. The school has established effective links with community agencies that support student health and wellbeing e.g. screening and immunisation programs and mental health services
				j. Culture and identity are recognised as significant in the mental health and wellbeing of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and community
				k. We develop opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff to feel connected to our school

For further information about this publication please contact

Brian Giles-Browne  
National Schools  
Coordinator, *Dare to Lead*  
brian@apapdc.edu.au

APAPDC  
PO Box 112  
Hindmarsh SA 5007  
Tél: 0423 915 552

## Dare to Lead

Managed by the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC), *Dare to Lead* is a national program for school leaders to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. Nearly 5000 schools and over 200 educational organisations across Australia have signed up to be members of the *Dare to Lead* coalition. As coalition members they are committed to:

- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students
- promoting cultural understanding
- supporting the goals of Reconciliation.

The *Dare to Lead* project is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Science and Training. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training or *Dare to Lead*. © Commonwealth of Australia 2007. This publication may contain images of people who are deceased. Please use sensitivity in its distribution. Images adapted from Spirit Figures © Dale R. Huddleston 1999 (Ngandi people, Roper River NT; Wiradjuri people, Central Western NSW) — reproduced with permission.



[www.daretolead.edu.au](http://www.daretolead.edu.au)

