

## Toowoomba Catholic Diocese Statement of Commitment

Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander peoples belong to one of the oldest living cultures in the world. Their culture, identity and spirituality have sacred connections to the land and waterways and date back many thousands of years. These beliefs have been handed down orally from generation to generation.

The basis of this statement of commitment has been developed as there is a significant gap in many social indicators between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community. We are determined to work collaboratively to make a genuine difference in closing this gap

The Darling Downs and South West region is home to a diverse and rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Catholic Diocese has a role to play in supporting the closing of the gap in social and economic indicators and developing stronger and more respectful relationships.

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### Statement of Commitment

This agreement commits Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba to developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) by June 2010

Development of this RAP will involve consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, people and structures within the operational arm of the Diocese. People involved in this process will be drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community.

#### Areas for action will include:

**Respect** - Engaging people to learn about history and culture, celebrating days of significance and respectfully drawing upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, identity and spirituality.



**Relationship** – We acknowledge that for a relationship to be healthy it needs to be based on a foundation of mutual respect. In this place we have a shared history of this not being the case. The Diocese will explore ways that nurture and support informal and formal relationships between Catholic agencies, schools and parishes and the First Peoples of this Diocese.

**Opportunities** - We believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and members of the wider Catholic community have skills and resources which can bring about greater equity for all. We commit to finding ways that can create pathways to greater opportunities and quality of life.

Signed

Four handwritten signatures in blue ink, corresponding to the names listed below: Bishop William Morris, Ms Kristian Rose, Dr Mark Copland, and Ms Raelene Ward.

Bishop William Morris Ms Kristian Rose Dr Mark Copland Ms Raelene Ward



Friday September 4<sup>th</sup> 2009