



Students at Elizabeth College



A supportive environment for Elizabeth

Elizabeth College Principal, Mr Greg Suitor, found that in spite of efforts to curb harassment, some students' learning outcomes were still being adversely affected by bullying and other forms of racially motivated aggression. He believed that certain steps still needed to be taken to assure students' security and to maximise educational benefits for all students.

The **Supportive College Environment Framework** was developed by the college to improve the learning environment. The framework has four components which include:

- policies and practices
- appropriate curriculum and facilities
- ongoing professional development
- student/staff involvement in the delivery of policies, practices and curriculum.

At the beginning of each year, staff work through the framework with students and develop classroom management approaches in line with

the school's strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour.

Trained student volunteers work together with teachers, counsellors and community members (including a police officer, social worker, doctor, chaplain and Aboriginal support officers) to deal with school incidents through mediation.

'A fair bit of time has been spent on building a very strong supportive environment in terms of behaviour management, anti-harassment, individual confidence and self-esteem building', Greg Suitor said.

Elizabeth College is a senior secondary college with 1300 students, located in North Hobart. The student population is culturally diverse, with approximately 35 per cent born overseas or with parents who were born overseas and 3 per cent from an Aboriginal background.

For more information, contact Elizabeth College on 03 6235 6555

Making history

The *Racism. No way!* project is a national response to countering racism in Australian schools.

For the first time, the project assesses the extent of racism in Australian schools and provides a consistent approach across the nation for challenging it. A series of resources and practical strategies are provided for the use of school communities. The project includes a website which provides:

- a guide for Australian schools
- a timeline of key events in Australia's developing cultural diversity and race relations
- Australian legislation and international law relating to racial discrimination
- facts and figures about Australia's cultural diversity
- international approaches to education for countering racism
- programs and strategies for countering racism in education systems across Australia
- an annotated bibliography, comprising books, articles, teaching kits and other resources that deal with racism and anti-racism education
- games and activities aimed at engaging students in strategies to counter racism
- a framework for countering racism which outlines responsibilities for systems, schools and individual members of the school community
- classroom activities giving teachers strategies and resources to support the principles of anti-racism education.

For more information, visit the website at www.racismnoway.com.au

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Small school tackles big issues



Performance by students

When several students objected to standing for the raising of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands flags and others refused to stand for the playing of the national anthem, Lyons Primary School was forced to review its approach for developing cultural understandings.

Commenting on the incident, the school, which is located in Woden Valley, Canberra ACT, acknowledged that while it was making real attempts to enhance understandings of cultural diversity, it needed to do additional work on the difficult issue of racism and on student interaction in the classroom and the playground.

With a demonstrated commitment to educating for cultural harmony, the school has expanded its cultural diversity program to include a unit of work which incorporates:

- Indigenous history and how it relates to the words in the national anthem
- the notion of national pride and the meanings of national symbols such as the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands flags
- when, where and why it is important to show respect.

The unit was developed with input from students, teachers and parents and further reflects the



Flag-raising at Lyons P.S.

school's commitment to work with the community to develop respect and an appreciation of Australia's Indigenous and multicultural heritage and to promote responsible citizenship.

The school, which has a student population of 102 including a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with English as a second language, provides an excellent example of how a small school can actively address issues of cultural diversity and promote tolerance and understanding.

For more information, contact Lyons Primary School on 02 6205 5700

Difference is OK at Ludmilla



Students at Ludmilla Primary School in the Northern Territory come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a variety of rural communities including Yolngu students from Arnhem land, students living in urban areas and predominantly non-Aboriginal children from Royal Australian Airforce families make up the school population.

The school values its diversity and promotes an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as a vehicle for overcoming cultural boundaries and facilitating self-understanding. It implements a number of ongoing initiatives to achieve this aim including:

A Pre-school Fathers' Day Excursion

Non-Aboriginal fathers of pre-school students are taken on an excursion with members of the local Aboriginal community. As part of the excursion, fathers and sons from a diverse range of backgrounds look for spears and digeridoos. This provides an opportunity to learn about Indigenous Australian history and to build relationships between local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

An Orientation Program

The Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW) meets all newly enrolled students and parents and conducts cross-cultural training as part of the school's orientation program.

Aboriginal/Cultural Day Activities

A range of interactive activities are held within the school to promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Larrakia Week

Larrakia, the Traditional Owners of Darwin, hold celebrations at the school to share their culture with the children and the wider community. Speaking of the school's commitments, the school Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker said, ***'We want to make all students aware that differences are okay and we should be proud of ourselves. We want acceptance of ourselves and others in our school.'*** For more information, contact Ludmilla Primary School on 08 8999 3233

Footscray farewells Spanish days



For Footscray City College, programs such as Spanish days which label students solely according to their cultural backgrounds are a thing of the past. Instead the school focuses on inclusive programs and practices which assist all students to embrace diversity and to appreciate, relate to and learn from each other.

The government secondary college, which has always had students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, encourages parents to participate in their children's education. Reports are translated into major languages and interpreters are made available at parent-teacher interviews when required. Translated information on a range of issues such as the

education maintenance allowance and the equal opportunity policy are provided. In addition, the English as a Second Language (ESL) department holds meetings with the parents of ESL students to explain the complexities of the Victorian Certificate of Education.

Curriculum documents across key learning areas are periodically audited to ensure that they are inclusive and departments are encouraged to develop culturally relevant programs. Students are encouraged to develop their views and experiences through the study of topics such as identity, racism and cultural development.

Information technology, particularly the Internet, is used in delivering multicultural perspectives and to

provide students with access to multilingual resources.

The inclusive strategies have created an open and empowering school culture and a harmonious school community which appreciates other people and cultures, rejecting overtly racist and prejudiced behaviour.

Information provided in this article has been adapted from the **Multicultural Education Programs and Practices in Victorian Schools Case Studies** document, produced by the Department of Education, Victoria, 1999.

For more information, contact Footscray City College on 03 9689 6900

Growing in harmony in Sydney



Two hundred and eighty-five students from 45 schools met in Sydney recently to celebrate differences and explore a range of themes relating to cultural diversity.

The **Growing in Harmony Conference for Arabic and Vietnamese Speaking Youth**, which involved seven metropolitan districts, Bankstown, Fairfield, Granville, Liverpool, Parramatta, Port Jackson and St George, was designed to build on the positive strategies already in place in schools and communities and to allow students to address a number of issues:

- what does multiculturalism mean to you?
- how do we cope with racism and stereotyping and how can they be reduced?
- what types of strategies assist students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to grow in harmony?
- how can we reach out to other student groups to help them join in?

Deputy Premier of NSW, the Hon Dr Andrew Refshauge opened the conference at the Petersham Town Hall in inner Sydney. Community Information Officers, Multicultural/ESL Consultants as well as community workers facilitated workshops while students delivered music, dance, drama and public speaking presentations. Speakers included representatives from the NSW Department of Education and Training, the Australian Arabic Community Council, the Vietnamese Community in Australia and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Strategies and recommendations arising from the conference were forwarded to participating schools to assist in future planning and program development.

For more information, contact the Community Information Officer, St George District, NSW Department of Education and Training on 02 9582 2800



Learning in Harmony mural by Arthur Phillip H.S.

Catholics educating for justice, truth and Reconciliation



The National Catholic Education Commission has released a statement for Reconciliation, ***Educating for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation: A Partnership with the Indigenous***

Peoples of Australia. The statement responds to major challenges facing the fabric of Australian society.

First conceived by state and territory based Co-ordinators of Indigenous

Education Programs, it declares several commitments to enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples:

- to engage in the process of 'awakening' which will bring about a new heart in the people of this land
- to acknowledge that justice and truth are at the heart of Reconciliation
- to support and encourage educators in the Catholic community to journey with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to work towards Reconciliation through education
- to reflect upon and evaluate the progress of Catholic education in Australia towards Reconciliation.

The statement builds on the existing work undertaken by Catholic Education

Commissions across Australia in meeting the needs of Indigenous students and their families. It further reinforces the role of educators as contributors to the Reconciliation process.

For more information, contact the National Catholic Education Commission on 02 6201 9830 or visit www.ncec.catholic.edu.au

Reconciliation around WA

The Education Department of Western Australia in partnership with Reconciliation WA has developed an innovative strategy for spreading the word about Reconciliation.



The Reconciliation Van, which visits school communities across the state to promote and facilitate Reconciliation, is a practical mobile classroom that caters for students, staff and community members in both government and non-government schools. Lessons focus on the ideas of friendship, respect, equity and harmony and target students in Years 1 to 12. Younger students learn songs, Aboriginal stories and about traditional lifestyles and culture while older students are introduced to Aboriginal history and participate in discussions about Reconciliation issues.

The lessons focus on 'working together', understanding all viewpoints and demonstrating care and concern for others while maintaining the rights and responsibilities of all individuals and groups.

The Reconciliation Van is operated by a qualified teacher with the assistance of local Aboriginal people who are essential in contributing local

Aboriginal perspectives.

The van is in constant demand by both government and non-government schools and has received very positive feedback on the educational content of its programs and on the strong, clear messages that it conveys.

For further information, contact Australians for Reconciliation, on 08 9325 3377 or (within WA) freecall 1800 060 269

Anti-racism education around Australia

Each state and territory education system around Australia develops and implements policies and programs to counter racism within their schools.

In addition to these broad initiatives, individual schools regularly implement anti-racism policies and programs at the local level. The most successful of these initiatives have been those which adopt a whole school approach and involve action across the full range of a school's activities including:

- policies and guidelines
- curriculum and pedagogy
- training and development
- student support and development
- parent and community involvement
- monitoring and reporting

The articles featured in this newsletter reflect good practice in one or more of these six areas for action.

Dolls reverse racist trends at kindy

The kids at JB Cleland Kindergarten may be small but they are tackling the big issue of racial prejudice thanks to an innovative new project.



The action research project, which used 'persona' dolls to encourage critical thinking and to challenge racism, was conducted with a focus group of 15 kindergarten children at the South Australian school.

The dolls included Yu Yu who was told she couldn't join in the game because her skin was too dark, Long Long who was told he couldn't be a boy because his hair looked like a girl's, and Sima who had brought in a letter from her grandmother written in Persian. These mock situations were used to raise important issues on racism and cultural diversity for the children to discuss.

In addition, the dolls were made available for the children to borrow along with a bag of clothes and a diary, and families were encouraged to write about the dolls' activities in the children's homes.

The results of the project have been outstanding and so far include:

- more children reporting unfair situations
- the addressing of other areas of bias including gender, ability and age in addition to race
- a greater acceptance of children from different racial backgrounds measured by a sociometric study.

For more information, contact JB Cleland Kindergarten on 08 8379 6053

Peace good enough for Goodna



Before the **PeaceBuilders Partnership** program was introduced, Goodna State School reported incidents of physical violence, racial intolerance and absenteeism combined with low staff morale and low levels of parent and community involvement. Today, the Queensland school, located in the Ipswich District, boasts a positive school environment which understands and accepts cultural difference.

The **PeaceBuilders Partnership** program, a five year initiative funded through a variety of sources including the Community Renewal Program, Ipswich City Council, private sponsorship and Education Queensland, has four basic principles:

- PeaceBuilders praise people
 - PeaceBuilders give up put-downs
 - PeaceBuilders notice hurts and right wrongs
 - PeaceBuilders seek wise people.
- The program emphasises under-



Goodna rappers

standing of the many cultures reflected in the school population through a variety of activities such as Goodna Community Day, National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week and the employment of staff from various cultural backgrounds. Community involvement is an essential component of the program which aims to develop a mutually supportive and accepting community.

- Project outcomes include:
- a stronger supportive school environment which works to maximise children's opportunities in life
 - a reduction in violence and acts of aggression within the school community
 - improved partnerships between



Healthy Breakfast Program

school, home and the community

- a higher level of awareness and a practical appreciation of a healthy lifestyle.

For more information, contact Goodna State School on 07 3288 3366 or visit the school's website at www.goodnass.qld.edu.au

Combat racism online

The **Racism. No way!** website is an exciting new resource which targets both teachers and students. It provides access to a range of reference materials, actions for combating racism, a number of interactive games for students and activities for teachers to use in the classroom. Features include lesson ideas, quizzes, cartoons, fact sheets, competitions and interviews with famous Australians.

For more information, visit the website at

www.racismnoway.com.au





Year 4-7 footballers

Point Pearce Aboriginal School meets Maitland Lutheran Primary



A football match between Year 4-7 students two years ago initiated the first of many sporting, cultural and educational experiences shared by two South Australian schools.

Students and staff at Point Pearce Aboriginal and Maitland Lutheran schools in the central Yorke Peninsula have recognised the importance of social interaction for building positive relationships. Students from all cultural backgrounds now meet regularly to

share stories, lessons, musical performances and a number of other cultural and sporting activities.

One recent activity involved a visit by junior primary students from the Maitland Lutheran school to Point Pearce. The students shared books that they had written, half an hour of playtime and an afternoon tea. According to one Maitland Lutheran teacher, the level of interaction between the children from the two schools was fantastic. Mixed football

matches and a performance by didgeridoo player, Adrian Ross, are examples of other activities organised by the schools.

The project has been funded entirely within the schools' existing budgets and operates within normal school hours. It represents a positive local initiative for developing cross-cultural understanding.

For more information, contact Maitland Lutheran Primary on 08 8832 2288

Got a story?

Write to Racism. No way! and publish your school's initiative on the web.

Racism. No way!

P.O.Box 590

Darlinghurst

NSW 2010

email: webkeeper@racismnoway.com.au



About the project

The **Racism. No way!** project aims to assist school communities and education systems to recognise and address racism in the learning environment. The project is an initiative of Chief Executive Officers of education systems across Australia.

The project is managed and educational content has been developed by Government State and Territory education systems, the National Catholic Education Commission, the National Council of Independent Schools' Associations and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Funding for the project was provided by Government State and Territory education systems, the NSW Catholic Education Commission and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

The work of the project was supported by the expertise of teachers, curriculum officers and community members throughout Australia.

For more information, visit www.racismnoway.com.au

