



Reframing the Relationship Plan

2024



Acknowledgement of Country

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Queensland and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to the Elders – past and present – for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state. First Nations people have expert knowledge developed over thousands of generations in caring for country.

As an emergency services organisation, we look to our First Nations communities for their knowledge and wisdom – developed over tens of thousands of years – in caring for country, and to learn how we can support in healing country, now and into the future.

First Nations Artwork - Together by Sarrita and Tarris King



Through its depiction of key cultural sites and incorporating elements such as fire, water and earth, this artwork addresses the theme of communities merging together through shared values. The use of charcoal colours relates to the regeneration of the land and the role the elements play in shaping the diverse landscapes. The smaller campsites merge into one large campsite along the travelling lines with the different colours of the smaller circles representing the diversity between

communities. The larger campsite, through the use of multiple colours, portrays values like teamwork, camaraderie and respect. The movement of people between smaller and larger communities is represented through the travelling lines, and the use of colour represents the diversity of people making these journeys.

Artists:

Sarrita King is a highly talented aboriginal artist from the NT, who combines traditional Aboriginal techniques such as 'dotting' but fuses it with other techniques inherited from her father. Her artworks are striking depictions of the Australian landscape and its harsh landscapes.

Tarris King is a highly talented aboriginal artist from the NT, who uses the traditional Aboriginal dotting style in a refreshing and complex way, depicting Australian topography.

Message from the Acting Commissioner

It is my privilege to present the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Reframing the Relationship Plan 2024.

The plan is our commitment and way forward as we reframe and build stronger relationships with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It builds on the commitments identified in the QFES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2022-2025 and supports the Queensland Government Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the Queensland Government.

The plan outlines actions we can all take to progress a reframed relationship. QFES has already commenced this work through the establishment of the First Nations Strategy and Partnerships branch in late 2023. The branch will lead a comprehensive body of work to embed cultural capability across the department including the development of a First Nations Framework to build stronger relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as support the department with its journey through the Queensland Government's Path to Treaty.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the plan and the actions you can take. This is our opportunity to acknowledge and respect the unique cultures, histories and ongoing contributions of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, listen to their perspectives, and make changes that will deliver improved outcomes to the communities of Queensland.



Acting Commissioner

Stephen Smith AFSM

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Introduction

In 2019, the Queensland Government and the Reparations Taskforce developed a joint *Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government*. The Statement of Commitment acknowledges, embraces, and celebrates the humanity of Indigenous Australians. The statement also commits the government to move forward together with mutual respect, recognition, and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

The *Public Sector Act 2022* (the Act) was passed in Queensland Parliament in 2022 and introduced a framework for the Reframing the Relationship commitment. Part 3 of the Act acknowledges that public sector organisations have a unique role and responsibility to reframe relationships and support the Queensland Government to:

- recognise the importance to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the right to self-determination; and
- foster a culturally capable workforce and a culturally safe workplace by developing the cultural capability of the entities.

Cultural capability is defined in the Act as the ‘integration of knowledge about experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the entity’s workplace standards, policies, practices, and attitudes to produce improved outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples’.

Under the Act, all prescribed entities must develop, publish, and implement a Reframing the Relationship Plan. The Reframing the Relationship Plan is themed around eight (8) objectives set out in the Act. Moving forward, the QFES Reframing the Relationship Plan will replace the QFES Cultural Capability Action Plan 2022-2025.

QFES Equity and Diversity Plan

The *Public Sector Act 2022* (Chapter 2) requires all Queensland Government agencies to actively progress equity and diversity in employment matters for diversity target groups, which includes Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A further requirement of Chapter 2 is the development of an Equity and Diversity Plan which aims to promote, support and progress equity and diversity in relation to employment matters.

On 17 April 2023, the Public Sector Governance Council approved the 2023-2026 diversity targets for QFES staff that identify as Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be four per cent.

The First Peoples and Culture actions within the QFES Equity and Diversity Plan are consistent with the actions within the QFES Reframing the Relationship Plan 2024.

Objective 1 Recognise and Honour

Recognise and honour Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Queensland

We will:

- 1.1 Demonstrate respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by observing culturally significant events, including but not limited to:
 - National Closing the Gap Day
 - National Reconciliation Week (including National Sorry Day and Mabo Day)
 - NAIDOC Week
 - International Day of the World's Indigenous People
 - Indigenous Business Month
- 1.2 Continue to support the annual Closing the Gap Awards recognising the people, partnerships and communities we work with to improve outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 1.3 Investigate the opportunity to provide remuneration to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples for their cultural knowledge and contributions relating to key QFES settings in a way that honours cultural protocols, acknowledges cultural intellectual property and supports the mutual benefits in the protection of Country.
- 1.4 Utilise internal and external communication mediums to recognise the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, volunteers and communities.
- 1.5 Continue to support and deliver the QFES commitment under the Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Action Plan 2023-2025.

Measures of success:

- 1.1 Promotion of significant events to increase awareness and understanding of First Nations issues, history, contributions and perspectives.
- 1.2 The annual QFES Closing the Gap Awards are promoted and held.
- 1.3 Commence researching and preparing options for remunerating Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples for their cultural knowledge and contributions when assisting QFES.
- 1.4 Contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, volunteers and communities are recognised through staff emails, stories /videos placed on the QFES Gateway or articles published in the Response Magazine.

- 1.5 New and replacement Queensland Fire and Rescue Service stations and/or composite facilities and signage in existing stations is replaced with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names through engagement with relevant advisory bodies to ensure accurate and respectful signage.

Objective 2 Truth-Telling

Engage in truth-telling about the shared history of all Australians

We will:

- 2.1 Establish and expand the First Nations Strategy and Partnerships Branch to coordinate the embedding of a reframed relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across QFES.
- 2.2 Continue to participate and support the Queensland Government's Path to Treaty and Reframing the Relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.
- 2.3 Undertake research into the administrative history of QFES to identify the agency's historical interactions with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate in the Treaty process.
- 2.4 Raise awareness and educate QFES staff on the Queensland Government's Path to Treaty and Reframing the Relationship programs.

Measures of success:

- 2.1 Recruitment of staff in the First Nations Strategy and Partnerships Branch has occurred.
- 2.2 QFES officers continue to actively participate in the Queensland Government's Path to Treaty and Reframing the Relationship activities.
- 2.3 Commence documenting the administrative history of QFES in preparation for the department to participate in the Path to Treaty process.
- 2.4 Communication material regarding the Queensland Government's Path to Treaty and Reframing the Relationship activities is developed and shared across QFES.

Objective 3 Self-Determination

Recognise the importance of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the right to self-determination

We will:

- 3.1 Facilitate and support the delivery of First Nations traditional fire workshops to enable the sharing of cultural fire knowledge on traditional lands.
- 3.2 Continue to participate as a member of whole-of-government committees and working groups overseeing reforms involving the moving of decision-making closer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to enable greater self-determination and changes to service delivery that align with the needs of the community.
- 3.3 Investigate holding a QFES First Nations Staff Forum to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to identify opportunities, initiatives, development needs and options to progress QFES Reframing the Relationship with First Nation people.

Measures of success:

- 3.1 Delivery of First Nations traditional fire workshops have commenced.
- 3.2 QFES officers continue to actively participate in whole-of-government committees and working groups to progress greater self-determination and changes in service delivery.
- 3.3 A proposal seeking to hold a QFES First Nations Staff Forum has been developed and considered by the Executive Leadership Team.

Objective 4 Cultural Capability and Cultural Safety

Promote cultural safety and cultural capability at all levels in QFES

We will:

- 4.1 Embed cultural awareness and capability within QFES by providing resources and professional development training that covers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, protocols and traditions.
- 4.2 Include the Reframing the Relationship Plan in the QFES governance and reporting framework for greater accountability.
- 4.3 Conduct a campaign to improve the completion of diversity data census so it is more accurate to reflect the workforce.
- 4.4 Develop an education campaign, including fact sheets and conversation guides, to assist QFES Managers and Supervisors to have conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff about the importance of updating their diversity data in Aurion, ensuring the campaign is delivered in a culturally safe way to these employees.

Measures of success:

- 4.1 Cultural awareness and capability training offered and delivered to QFES.
- 4.2 Reframing the Relationship Plan is included in the QFES governance and reporting framework.
- 4.3 A diversity data census campaign is undertaken to improve QFES diversity data, including those identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 4.4 Supporting educational material on the importance of diversity data is developed and provided to Managers and Supervisors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to assist them with facilitating discussion with their staff.

Objective 5 Partnerships and Decision-Making

Work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to actively promote, include and act in a way that aligns with their perspectives

We will:

- 5.1 Ensure Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are engaged in the development and delivery of policies, programs and services.
- 5.2 Review current partnership arrangements with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Queensland to identify opportunities for enhancement or areas where a partnership is non-existing.

Measures of success:

- 5.1 Review existing mechanisms used by QFES to engage with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Islander peoples during the development and delivery of policies, programs and services.
- 5.2 An audit of current partnerships with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples is undertaken and opportunities for local partnership enhancement or where a partnership is required is identified.

Objective 6 Workforce and Leadership

Ensure QFES workforce and leadership teams are reflective of the community they serve

We will:

- 6.1 Investigate new recruitment opportunities and advertise vacancies through inclusion and diversity networks to attract First Nation applicants.
- 6.2 Support and promote the career progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through opportunities.
- 6.3 Continue to support Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples with opportunities to enter QFES for career development.

Measures of success:

- 6.1 Review current recruitment arrangements to identify opportunities for new arrangements that will increase First Nations applicants.
- 6.2 Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees participating in formal career development programs, such as the Public Service Commission Career Pathway Program.
- 6.3 Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are provided opportunities to enter QFES to develop their career through programs such as Career Trackers and promote QFES as an attractive placement choice for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are participating in the Policy Futures Graduate Program.

Objective 7 Fair and Inclusive Public Sector

Promoting a fair and inclusive workplace that supports a sense of dignity and belonging for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples

We will:

- 7.1 Investigate establishing a First Nations Peer Support Network to provide a culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to meet and support each other.
- 7.2 Investigate the development of a support program for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and their supervisors.
- 7.3 Review the employee assistance program and investigate the cultural safety offered by providers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Measures of success:

- 7.1 Commence researching and propose a mechanism to enable the establishment of a QFES First Nations Peer Network.
- 7.2 Research First Nations employment support programs to identify material and opportunity for development and inclusion in a QFES First Nations employment support program.
- 7.3 Review the current Employee Assistance Program to identify providers with recognised First Nations experience to determine opportunities to enhance cultural safety offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Objective 8 Aims, Aspirations and Employment

Support the aims, aspirations and employment needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the need for their greater involvement in the public sector

We will:

- 8.1 Continue to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses where the opportunity arises in accordance with procurement requirements.
- 8.2 Ensure QFES has First Nations representation at relevant First Nations events and conferences.

Measures of success:

- 8.1 The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business that have been engaged by QFES where the opportunity arises.
- 8.2 QFES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have been provided the opportunity to attend relevant First Nations events and conferences.

Audit of the Reframing the Relationship Plan

The *Public Sector Act 2022* also includes a requirement that as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, the Chief Executive of the prescribed entity must audit the entity's performance against their plan and may amend the plan at any time. For this Plan, this will occur during the July-September 2024 period.

As QFES is transferring to a new entity from 1 July 2024, the department's 2024 Reframing the Relationship Plan will be reviewed and refreshed to ensure it aligns with the vision and strategic objectives of the newly created Queensland Fire Department and will incorporate new actions as the department continues its journey of Reframing the Relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.