

# Yangga Dahgu – Mekem Gen

## Reframing the Relationship Roadmap





## Acknowledgment of Peoples and Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians in the State of Queensland. We acknowledge the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land, seas, waters, air and resources for more than 60,000 years, prior to the British colonisation of Queensland.

We acknowledge the colonisation of Queensland occurred without the consent of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and often against their active resistance. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples assert they have never ceded their sovereignty over their lands, seas, waters, air and resources and they continue to assert their sovereignty, and recognise that colonisation has had a devastating, and ongoing, impact on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as two unique and diverse peoples made up of many distinct communities and groups, each with their own unique laws, traditions, languages, culture, and traditional knowledge. The process of truth-telling will help inform the Queensland community generally and help heal the trauma suffered by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples because of colonisation. The process will inform treaty negotiations between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and the State highlighting the resilience, enduring culture, law/lore and knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, demonstrating how these strengths are priceless assets for Queensland.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present as well as the existing and emerging leaders who walk together in partnership on this journey. We particularly pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within our organisation, whose persistence and resilience is evident every day in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and with non-Indigenous staff, to make a difference.

Drawn from the *Path to Treaty Act 2023*





---

## The origin of Yangga Dahgu — Mekem Gen

*Yangga Dahgu — Mekem Gen* means ‘working together to make it again’.

In Yuggera language *Yangga Dahgu* (young – ga darr – goo) means ‘working together’ and in Torres Strait Islander Yumpla Tok *Mekem Gen* (Mec – em – gen) means ‘make it again’.

The combination of these words in language have been chosen as they represent an acknowledgment of the two distinct broader cultural groups of both Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While the department acknowledges the diversity of Aboriginal languages across Queensland, many of its leaders live and work on the country of the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples and it is the responsibility of those leaders to create the necessary change to reframe our relationship.

*Yangga Dahgu* reflects the need for the department to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create a reframed relationship. *Mekem Gen* reflects the generosity, strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their willingness to continue to guide the department on our journey to a reframed relationship.



---

## The motif

We acknowledge the contribution of Aboriginal artist and Gilimbaa designer Jenna Lee. Jenna is a descendant of the Larrakia people (NT).

The motif was created as a symbol and visual narrative of the department's and communities' collective strategy, commitment, journey and vision to ensure First Nations peoples' cultural identity, diversity and richness are central to decisions made with regard to children, families and communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have gathered around fires as communities for over 60,000 years to pass down knowledge and share stories.

At the heart of the department's motif is a fire representing people coming together, gathering in warmth and safety. As more gather, the flames grow brighter and stronger, fueled by the exchange of stories, knowledge and understanding, of each other and individually in self-determination.

Surrounding the fire is a dark layer of charcoal and smoke, acknowledging the trauma experienced by individuals, families and communities, as well as centuries of strength and resilience. The charcoal and smoke also represent both traditional and contemporary healing for communities and a symbol of the importance of the continuation of culture and cultural practice.

The final layer is the vibrant new growth, representing new beginnings for individuals, families and communities through safety, understanding, self-determination, resilience and healing.



## Contents

<b>Message from the Director-General .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Message from First Nations Council .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Reframing the Relationship Statement of Commitment.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Reframing the relationship — what did our staff tell us?.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Approach to consultation to inform Yangga Dahgu — Mekom Gen</i> <i>(Reframing the Relationship Roadmap) .....</i>	8
Findings .....	8
<b>Governance and reporting .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Alignment with national and state agendas .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Reframing the relationship priority areas for action .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Values and beliefs .....	11
Knowledge and understanding .....	12
Workforce/workplace capability .....	13
Relationships .....	15
Policy and service delivery .....	17
Structural considerations .....	19
<b>Appendix 1: Phased approach to the implementation of Yangga Dahgu — Mekom Gen .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Vision .....	21
Principles .....	21





## Message from the Director-General

In August 2022, the Queensland Government reaffirmed its commitment to a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through the Path to Treaty journey. In May 2023, the *Path to Treaty Act 2023* was assented to establish the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Institute to facilitate a truth-telling and healing process. When committing to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is critical to reflect on current programs, services, systems and processes and to identify the skills and resources necessary to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To understand our department's treaty-readiness, we began our own truth-telling process, rightfully led by our department's First Nations Council. Throughout this process, the department began the journey of learning and reflection, identifying and understanding the cultural, policy, program, structural and workforce related issues and barriers to treaty, and identifying the individual and organisational shift required to do things differently, to reframe our relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Together with the Board of Management, the First Nations Council led a process of respectful engagement with staff, to build an understanding of the Queensland Government's commitment to a reframed relationship, and to reflect on what this department needs to do to be treaty-ready and to inform this department's journey towards a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities.

I would like to thank the many staff who participated in these conversations, for truthfully sharing their perspectives and views, and what they believe we need to do to be better positioned to reframe our relationship with First Nations staff, families and communities, to engage in Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry processes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. These important and often challenging conversations have informed the development of *Yangga Dahgu — Mekem Gen (Reframing the Relationship Roadmap)*. The Reframing the Relationship Roadmap (Roadmap) identifies significant individual, as well as organisational priority areas for this department to reframe the relationship with First Nations peoples. Key priority areas of focus identified in the Roadmap include — developing strong culturally responsive leadership; growing our individual and collective knowledge of past and continuing impacts of government intervention in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; addressing systemic bias, institutional and direct racism and lateral violence; building a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally capable non-Indigenous workforce; privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provision; and strengthening the department's accountability, cultural governance and oversight.

I would also like to thank the First Nations Council for steering the direction of this work with their guidance, honesty, insights, and commitment to identifying areas for action; and for providing a future visioning, of what we, as a treaty-ready department will look like through the drafting of the department's Reframing the Relationship Statement of Commitment (Statement of Commitment). In drafting the Statement of Commitment, the First Nations Council have asked us to think about 'how we get to the dreaming'. I ask that you accept this gift from the First Nations Council members and turn your hearts and minds to help achieving the aspirations outlined in this future visioning statement.

The Roadmap, together with the Statement of Commitment, will guide the department in its journey to build on existing Queensland Government initiatives and investment including *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037*, and provide a framework to begin the significant organisational and individual change required to reframe the department's relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

## Message from First Nations Council

As this department begins its path to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the First Nations Council would like to acknowledge the department's executive leadership, in particular Deidre Mulkerin, Director-General and the Board of Management for being clear and intentional that this process will be led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We thank the executive leadership for their confidence in guiding the department on this journey.

As we consider the question of 'what it means to reframe the relationship', it's important to acknowledge that for more than 60,000 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have had systems of Customary Lore that defined what caring for the young and old looked like. Unfortunately, this knowledge has been displaced and undermined by systems and or practice that did not see or even hear us, that failed and at times continues to fail us by the inability to recognise the intergenerational impacts of trauma and grief. This is why the Statement of Commitment specifically notes truth-telling as one of the key things we need to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families, community-controlled organisations and peak organisations.

It is now time to develop strong culturally responsive leadership, strengthen the individual and collective knowledge of past and continuing colonial impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, work through a trauma-informed practice model, address systemic bias, institutional racism, and lateral violence, build a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally capable non-Indigenous workforce to support and improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and communities.

Together the Statement of Commitment and *Yangga Dahgu — Mekem Gen (Reframing the Relationship Roadmap)* provide the opportunity for this department to look toward a new future where the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities are recognised and valued, and rarely challenged. Together we can reframe our thinking and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, to recognise and celebrate what they do well, and celebrate the important role they play in the lives of children, young people, people with disability and older peoples.

**Deidre Mulkerin**

Director-General  
Department of Child Safety, Seniors  
and Disability Services

**Ron Weatherall**

Chair  
First Nations Council





## Executive summary

To prepare the department to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, a project team was established in November 2022, overseen by the First Nations Council (FNC) and the Board of Management (BOM), to develop a:

- *Reframing the Relationship Statement of Commitment*, which maps a preferred future state of treaty-readiness for the department.
- *Yangga Dahgu – Mekem Gen (Reframing the Relationship Roadmap)* which outlines high level priority areas for action to support the department to reframe its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To inform the Roadmap, the project team undertook an extensive, statewide internal consultation process, which included 145 engagement sessions attended by 2,745 participants. Issues raised by staff during these sessions include:

- Limited knowledge of the past history and continuing impact of the department, its predecessors and government on Queensland's First Nations' children, carers, people with disability and older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families.
- Systemic bias and racism.
- Cultural safety and culturally safe workplaces.
- The development and implementation of culturally responsive legislation, policy, programs, services, practice and systems.
- The ad hoc implementation of policy into practice.
- Concerns about power and control (doing things for or to, rather than with).
- Limited respect for the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Leadership and accountability.



The issues raised by staff provide the necessary starting point to support the department's planning and provides an insight into the significant individual and organisational change needed to begin to redefine and reframe the department's relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families, community-controlled organisations and peak organisations.

The *Statement of Commitment* and *Yangga Dahgu — Mekem Gen (Reframing the Relationship Roadmap)* prescribes a new way for staff to work more efficiently and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as a key strategic priority guided by key principles as outlined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Path to Treaty Act 2023*, the *Public Sector Act 2022* and the *Human Rights Act 2019* including:

- recognising and honouring Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Queensland
- engaging in truth-telling about the shared history of all Australians
- recognising the importance to Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination
- promoting cultural safety and cultural capability
- working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' to actively promote, include and act in a way that aligns with their perspectives, in particular when making decisions directly affecting them
- ensuring the workforce and leadership are reflective of the community they serve.







## Reframing the Relationship Statement of Commitment

In August 2022, the Queensland Government together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders committed to a reframed relationship with First Nation's peoples of Queensland through the signing of *Queensland's Path to Treaty Commitment* with a focus on Truth-Telling and Healing.

Considering this commitment, and with the guidance of the First Nations Council, the department commits to reframing its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by/through:

- Acknowledging the intergenerational impacts and trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the intersectionality impacting upon children, young people, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families as a result of the departments' historical and contemporary practices including forced removals.
- Engaging in local truth telling and healing processes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as appropriate.
- Acknowledging and reaffirming the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to be safe, to be treated equally and respectfully, and be free from discrimination based on their cultural origin or identity.
- Acknowledging and upholding the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families, to be included in all decisions that impact them.
- Committing to doing and being better in the future, alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, families, and communities, in equal and genuine high expectation partnerships and relationships, to ensure the best outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and undertaking measurable actions to achieve this change.
- Addressing the power imbalance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and the department by delegating the available child protection powers and functions of the departmental chief executive to the chief executive of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation.



- Ensuring all policies, programs, practices, business systems and decision-making processes are not biased against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families.
- Challenging the assumptions that underpin the continuing disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system.
- Engaging in trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices to address and heal the legacy of intergenerational impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Leadership accepting an individual and collective responsibility to develop, support and maintain the reframed relationship.
- Valuing, respecting, and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and cultural knowledge.
- Ensuring that all workplaces are culturally safe, free from any discrimination, and supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

We look forward to a new future where the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families and communities are recognised and valued, and rarely challenged.

We look forward to reframing our thinking and working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, to recognise and celebrate what they do well, and to acknowledge the important role they play in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, people with disability, and older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.





## Reframing the relationship – what did our staff tell us?

### **Approach to consultation to inform *Yangga Dahgu – Mekem Gen (Reframing the Relationship Roadmap)***

Between November 2022 and early August 2023, the project team delivered 145 plus engagements across the department (and the former Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs) portfolios with approximately 2,745 participants.

Conversations were focused on:

- providing opportunities for staff to reflect on what reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders means for them individually and collectively as part of the broader department
- how the business may need to change.

These engagements and conversations have informed the development of the Roadmap and internal truth-telling and healing planning processes.

The project team utilised a range of tools to frame planning discussions and to identify key priority areas for action, including the 2023 Working for Queensland results as it relates to workforce issues including:

- cultural safety
- racism and discrimination
- recruitment and career development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Engagement sessions were held across the state. First Nations-focused conversations, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff were held centrally and regionally to ensure the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

### **Findings**


The project team analysed over 4,600 plus responses received from participants who attended face-to-face and online consultations.

All senior leadership teams across the portfolio areas attended these sessions.

From these conversations several themes emerged including what significant individual and organisational changes may be required to reframe the department's relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This included:

- acknowledging the historic and contemporary impacts of government and departmental intervention in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- incorporating culturally responsive policy into practice
- incorporating a stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice and lens across the department's policies, programs and regulatory responsibilities



- 
- all decisions need to include and reflect a First Nations voice (this includes case management)
  - leaders need to demonstrate cultural awareness, humility and responsiveness
  - strengthening relationships and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, as well as organisations
  - building the cultural capability of staff.

## Governance and reporting

The Roadmap is an evolving document, which recognises and builds on the strength of our existing staff, initiatives and partnerships. Implementation of the Roadmap will take a collaborative approach that invites and encourages the participation of all staff, recognises and listens to the expertise and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and seeks staff input on opportunities for involvement.

The Roadmap will be staged over three years and overseen by the FNC and BOM.

Respective lead areas of the department will support the implementation, ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of the Roadmap and it will be a standing agenda item on both the Child and Family Strategy and Performance Committee and the Disability Reform Oversight Group. Executive leaders across the department will be responsible for driving the individual and organisational change required and reporting on progress through these two oversight groups.

Updates on the progress and implementation of the Roadmap will be regularly provided to the Queensland Public Sector Commission through the annual reporting required under the *Public Sector Act 2022*.

## Alignment with national and state agendas

The Roadmap and Statement of Commitment aligns with *Queensland's Path to Treaty Commitment* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework* and delivers the department's obligations to publish a 'reframing the relationship plan' as required under the *Public Sector Act 2022*.

Implementation of the Roadmap will contribute to the delivery of Queensland's commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the Queensland Government's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2025*, *Cultural Capability Action Plan 2023–2024* and *Our Way: A generational Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037* currently being delivered through the *Breaking Cycles action plan 2023–2025*.

Additionally, the Roadmap reflects the protection, promotion and respect of human rights in decision making, action and implementation, in accordance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Human Rights Act 2019* and the *Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy 2020–2040, Leading Healing Our Way*.



## Roadmap priority areas for action

Queensland's *Path to Treaty Commitment* and the recently amended *Public Sector Act 2022*, requires each government entity to develop a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. To develop a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including staff, children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families, community-controlled organisations and peak bodies requires a fundamental shift in individual and departmental values and beliefs to demonstrate the following key principles as outlined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Path to Treaty Act 2023*, the *Public Sector Act 2022*, and the *Human Rights Act 2019* including:

- recognising and honouring Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Queensland
- engaging in truth-telling about the shared history of all Australians
- recognising the importance of Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination
- promoting cultural safety and cultural capability
- working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to actively promote, include and act in a way that aligns with their perspectives, in particular when making decisions directly affecting them
- ensuring the workforce and leadership are reflective of the community they serve.

Engagement processes identified that building individual cultural capability is required across the department, to support staff at all levels, particularly across the leadership, to build the skills required to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families, community-controlled organisations and peak organisations.

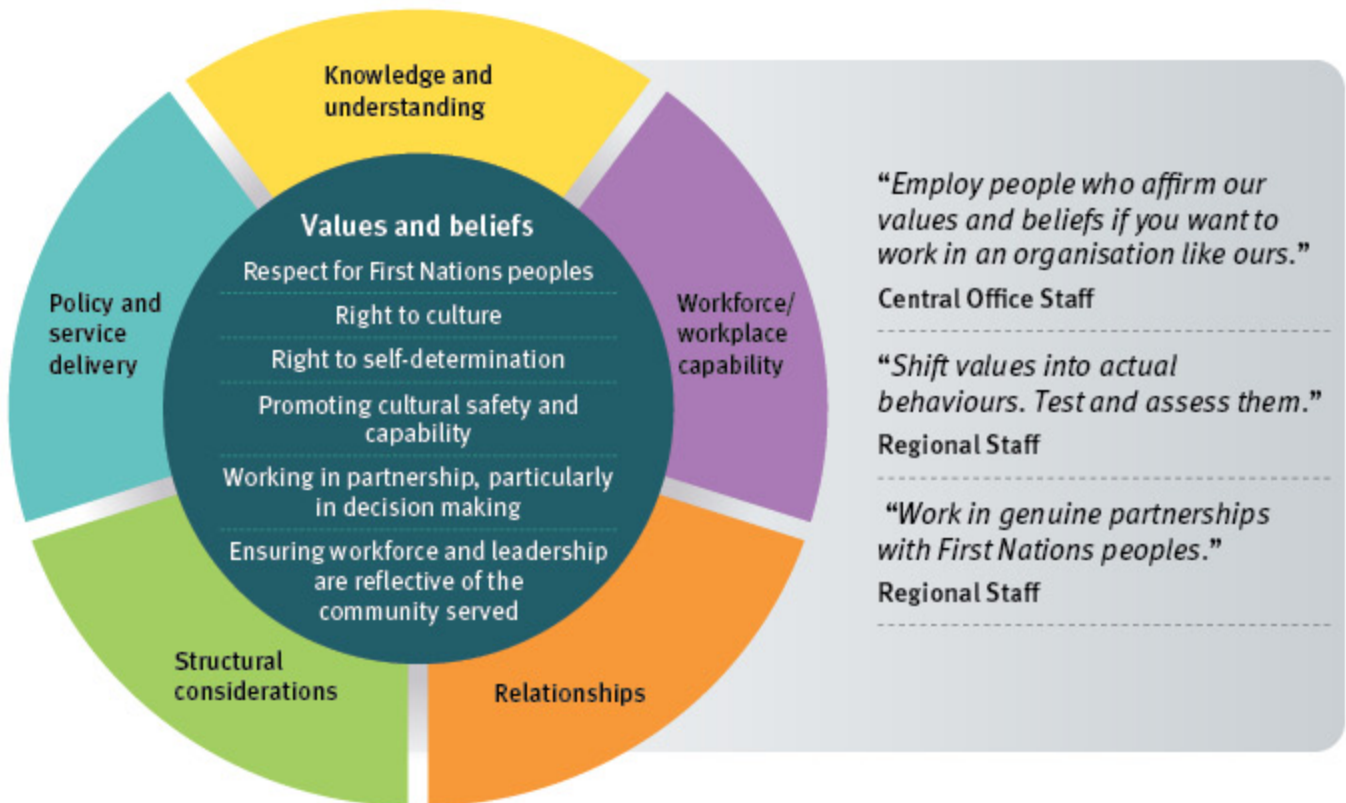
The Roadmap is informed by staff input and the *2023 Working for Queensland Survey* results, as set out against the following six individual and organisational domains:

- Values and beliefs.
- Knowledge and understanding.
- Workforce/workplace capability.
- Relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Policy development and service delivery.
- Structural considerations.



## Values and beliefs

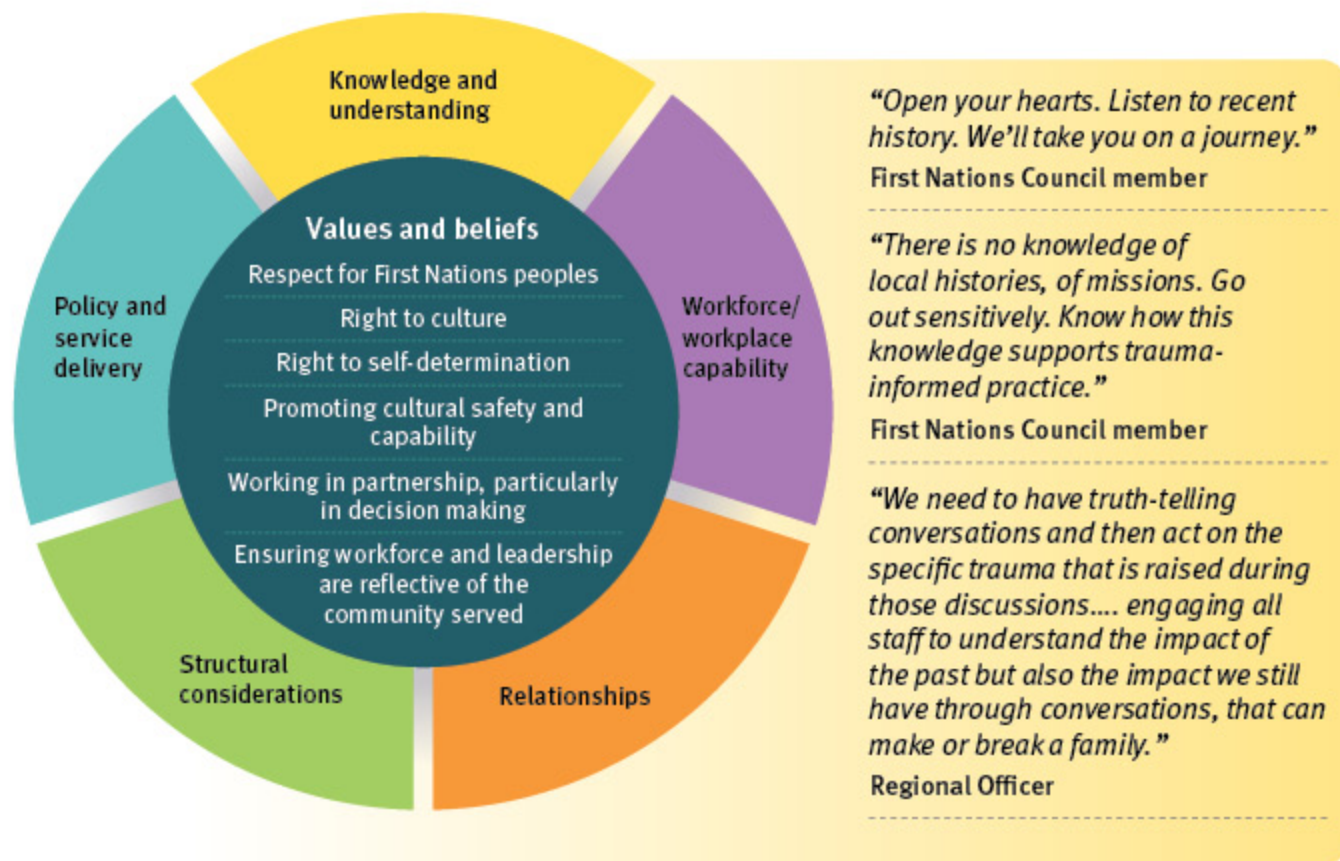
In line with *Queensland's Path to Treaty Commitment* and the *Public Sector Act 2022*, the Roadmap establishes a new strategic priority for this department to develop a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This means reframing the relationship with staff, children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families, community-controlled organisations and peak bodies, to be a leading culturally capable organisation.



Values and beliefs	
<b>Objectives</b>	Governance mechanisms, systems, policies, processes and procedures across all department business areas drive and reflect the values and beliefs needed for a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.
<b>Strategies</b>	<p>The department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a culturally aware, job ready workforce at all levels through the co-design and implementation of training and professional development consistent with the requirements in the <i>Public Sector Act 2022</i> and the <i>Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan July 2023 – June 2025</i> that identifies and promotes the individual skills and capabilities to create a reframed relationship within a culturally capable organisation.</li> <li>Include specific activities and accountability measures relating to cultural capability and cultural supervision in position descriptions, individual achievement capability planning and performance agreements.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	A reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, families, community-controlled organisations and peak bodies.



## Knowledge and understanding



Knowledge and understanding	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively participate in formal Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry processes.</li> <li>Increase staff knowledge and understanding of the department’s historical and contemporary impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.</li> <li>Support the health and wellbeing of all staff during the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry process and beyond.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies</b>	<p>The department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a whole-of-department working group to undertake Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry planning and readiness processes including change management and a communication strategy in preparation for the formal Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry process and beyond.</li> <li>Enhance staff knowledge and understanding of the historical and contemporary impacts of the department on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reviewing and updating cultural training initiatives including Starting the Journey</li> <li>developing and implementing face-to-face cultural training strategies and products.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ensure health and wellbeing services have the capacity to support individuals and teams during formal Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry processes and beyond.</li> </ul>



## Knowledge and understanding

### Outcomes

- The department actively participates in the formal Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry process and support government commitments to implement recommendations of the Inquiry.
- Staff have a broad knowledge and understanding of the intergenerational impacts and trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families, including those with a disability and those who are older, as a result of the department's historical and contemporary practices including forced removals.
- The health and wellbeing of all staff is actively supported during the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry.

## Workforce/workplace capability



*“What we bring as First Nations people is experience.”*

First Nations Council member

*“Your career path doesn’t progress by being the door mat, but by being the door itself.”*

First Nations Council member

*“Identified staff have cultural authority. Often staff are respected in the community but are not respected in Child Safety Service Centres. We need to be respectful of authority.”*

First Nations Council member

*“I’m learning you. Call me when there is a spot fire. Call me when there is a campfire. But don’t call me when there is an inferno”.*

Cultural Practice Advisor



<b>Workforce/workplace capability</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a culturally capable and trauma-informed workforce.</li> <li>• Build a viable and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.</li> <li>• All staff have a broad appreciation, knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' local history, perspectives and priorities.</li> <li>• Create culturally safe and respectful workplaces.</li> <li>• Develop culturally responsive leadership, service delivery and practice.</li> <li>• Establish a work environment where anti-racism is the norm.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies</b>	<p>The department will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local cultural induction packages are developed and implemented at place, in partnership with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</li> <li>• As a minimum, it establishes employment targets and pathways to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at all levels within and across the department in line with the <i>Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan July 2023 – June 2025</i> and the <i>Public Sector Act 2022</i>.</li> <li>• It develops and implements a:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– contemporary model of cultural supervision for all staff</li> <li>– cultural safety policy and program</li> <li>– strategy and/or processes to recognise and address lateral violence in the workplace</li> <li>– cultural mentoring program and a cultural capability assessment and review framework for senior executives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop and implement an anti-racism framework.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all levels of the organisation, consistent with the <i>Public Sector Act 2022</i>.</li> <li>• All staff have completed local cultural induction, at place.</li> <li>• All workplaces are culturally safe, free from any discrimination, and supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including their cultural knowledge, perspectives and values.</li> <li>• The human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to be safe, to be treated equally and respectfully, and be free from discrimination based on their cultural origin or identity is valued and upheld.</li> <li>• The workforce values, respects and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and cultural knowledge.</li> </ul>



## Relationships



### Relationships

#### Objectives

- Establish, across all levels of the organisation, respectful and high expectation relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:
  - staff
  - children, carers, people with disability, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, families and communities
  - funded community-controlled organisations and peak bodies.



<b>Relationships</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<p>The department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure the cultural insights and advice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff inform all decision-making processes, departmental policies, programs and practice frameworks.</li><li>• Ensure all policies, programs and services are co-designed, developed and delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community-controlled organisations.</li><li>• Build, strengthen and maintain relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and partners (at the local, regional and statewide levels).</li><li>• Support individuals to participate in the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry processes by providing improved and comprehensive access to individual records.</li><li>• In partnership with other departments, work with the Government Treaty-Readiness Committee to develop a multiagency approach to service delivery that is trauma-informed and places the client at the centre of the service response.</li><li>• Include the voices, perspectives and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and/or organisations as part of the department's performance review processes including operational performance reviews and other relevant performance assessment mechanisms.</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>The department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure policies, programs, services and practice frameworks are co-designed, developed and delivered in partnership with the FNC, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, peoples, communities, peak bodies and/or organisations.</li><li>• Value, respect and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and cultural knowledge.</li><li>• Acknowledge and reaffirm the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to self-determination, to be safe, to be treated equally and respectfully and be free from discrimination based on their cultural origin or identity.</li><li>• Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities actively participate in decisions that affect them.</li></ul>



## Policy and service delivery



### Policy and service delivery

#### Objectives

- All systems, policy, programs, services, and practice are culturally responsive and meet the needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- The department privileges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled service provision.



## Policy and service delivery

<b>Strategies</b>	<p>The department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and amend current systems, policies, programs, practice and legislation to ensure they are unbiased and culturally responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.</li><li>• Co-design and develop an investment and commissioning blueprint to support the transition of funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.</li><li>• Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– co-design, develop and deliver policies, programs and services to meet their needs and priorities</li><li>– review and evaluate effectiveness and outcomes of the above.</li></ul></li><li>• Develop and report on a place-based performance framework that assesses how the perspectives, views and input of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented in the development and application of legislation, policies and procedures.</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>The department will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All systems, processes, policies, programs and practice are unbiased and culturally responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.</li><li>• Development of a co-designed approach to transitioning funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.</li><li>• The right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to actively participate in decisions that impact them is clearly evident in the day-to-day operations of the department.</li></ul>



## Structural considerations



*“There is a lot of variation in relation to cultural performance across the state. This variation is reflective of the maturity of the service centre and how it prioritises its responsiveness to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There are pockets where more than another ‘training session’ is going to be needed to help the service move forward. Staff don’t know what they don’t know and so conversations have to be had about ‘how to make people see what best practice is for First Nations families, what it’s like?’ It’s an opportunity to identify blind spots. It requires a strong outcomes focus.”*

Central Office Officer

*“You need to ask yourself, what can ‘I’ do to support this agency to be treaty-ready?”*

Regional Executive Director

*“We need less noddies, and more doies.”*

First Nations Council Member

### Structural considerations

#### Objectives

- Align with the whole-of-government approach to incorporate the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty and governance in day-to-day operations.
- Address the power imbalance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and the department.
- Address systemic bias and institutional racism.
- Strengthen cultural governance, oversight and accountability.
- Strengthen the authorising environment of frontline staff to implement existing culturally responsive service delivery and practice.
- Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices into decision making structures and processes.



## Structural considerations

<b>Strategies</b>	<p>The department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to expand and develop through technology, policy and legislation, with an initial focus on Unify, providing data to the community-controlled sector, and to review processes to achieve data sovereignty.</li><li>• Scale up the statewide implementation of delegated authority through the implementation of <i>Reclaiming our storyline: Transforming systems and practice by making decisions our way</i>.</li><li>• Review and amend existing departmental systems, tools and processes to eliminate systemic bias and institutional racism.</li><li>• Review existing departmental governance mechanisms to align with the principles of <i>Reframing the Relationship</i> under <i>The Public Sector Act 2022</i> (section 22).</li><li>• Develop and implement an agreed standard of culturally responsive service delivery and practice and assess all staff in the application of this standard through a behavioural indicator framework.</li><li>• Report on how it establishes and maintains high expectation relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities at all levels.</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>The department ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The principles of Indigenous data sovereignty and governance align with the whole-of-government approach and state government position.</li><li>• An increase in the number of sites/organisations and delegations delivered under <i>Reclaiming our storyline: Transforming systems and practice by making decisions our way</i>.</li><li>• Departmental systems and processes are free from systemic bias and/or institutional racism.</li><li>• Equal and genuine high expectation partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities at all levels, to ensure best outcomes.</li></ul>





# Appendix 1: Phased approach to the implementation of Yangga Dahgu – Mekem Gen

## Vision

Path to Treaty is a journey to a reframed relationship and shared future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and the Queensland Government will work collaboratively to move towards truth, healing and treaty making.

## Principles

The department will be guided by key principles as outlined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Path to Treaty Act 2023*, the *Public Sector Act 2022* and the *Human Rights Act 2019* including:

- recognising and honouring Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Queensland
- engaging in truth-telling about the shared history of all Australians
- recognising the importance of Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination
- promoting cultural safety and cultural capability
- working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to actively promote, include and act in a way that aligns with their perspectives, in particular when making decisions directly affecting them
- ensuring the workforce and leadership are reflective of the community they serve.

## Approach

### November 2022 – August 2023

- Establish a dedicated team within the department.
- Develop a Statement of Commitment.
- Develop the Roadmap.

### August 2023 – July 2024

- Launch the Statement of Commitment and the Roadmap.
- Establish an advisory group, of respective lead areas of the department, to develop implementation plans for the Reframed Relationship Roadmap, and to subsequent ongoing monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms.
- Implement, monitor and review the Roadmap.
- Develop a cultural safety policy and program for the department including a process to recognise and address lateral violence in the workplace.
- Development of a culturally responsive leadership capability assessment and review framework.



- Development of local cultural induction packages at place in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
- Respond to the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry, as required.

#### **July 2024 – July 2025**

- Implement a staged approach to cultural supervision for all staff and a cultural mentoring program.
- Respond to the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry, as required.

#### **July 2025 – July 2026**

- Develop a co-designed approach to transitioning funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.
- Respond to the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry, as required.





