



Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
**Economic Participation Action Plan**

July 2014

# Foreword

The Newman Government wants to see better life outcomes and a better lifestyle for Queensland's Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

**We are committed to enabling sustainable economic development that generates real jobs and supports prosperity in Indigenous communities. We also want to ensure that the majority of Indigenous Queenslanders who live in an urban environment have access to employment and business ownership opportunities.**

Under this Government, economic participation is at the centre of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy development and program delivery.

This Action Plan sets out a range of initiatives in partnership with the State Government and other stakeholders to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to participate in employment and business ownership.

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is everyone's business, and I'm pleased that companies large and small are taking up the challenge to increase Indigenous employment. The greatest opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment are within the private sector.

One of the best ways for people to improve their economic circumstances is to secure long-term, meaningful employment. Creating employment creates opportunities and wealth to give people the choice of pursuing other aspirations such as home ownership.

The Newman Government's Indigenous agenda is focussed on ensuring that State Government programs and funding are directed towards improving the stability and sustainability of Indigenous communities and improving the life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

A prosperous economy in which all Queenslanders can participate is to everyone's benefit, and that's what the Newman Government is providing.

**The Honourable  
Glen Elmes, MP**

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander and Multicultural Affairs and  
Minister Assisting the Premier

---



*“...We will be the greatest state to live, work and play with a natural environment that inspires an active lifestyle and healthy communities. We will have a community spirit that embraces our diversity and will give everyone the opportunity to shine—we will not leave anyone behind.”*

*Source: The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland—our working draft.*

# Contents

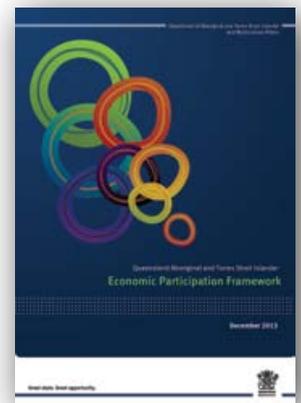
<b>The Framework</b> .....	<b>1</b>
The Queensland Plan.....	1
Context.....	2
<b>The Action Plan</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Assessment of outcomes.....	4
Governance.....	4
<b>Action Area 1: Individual capacity</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Action Area 2: Direct employment</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Action Area 3: Government infrastructure, services and policy</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Action Area 4: Private and other sector business and partnerships</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Actions</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Action Area 1: Individual capacity</b> .....	9
<b>Action Area 2: Direct employment</b> .....	11
<b>Action Area 3: Government infrastructure, services and policy</b> .....	13
<b>Action Area 4: Private and other sector business and partnerships</b> .....	15

# The Framework

The Queensland Government released the *Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Framework* (the Framework) in December 2013. It sets a clear goal—the economic independence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through increased employment and business ownership.

The Framework seeks to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to participate in, and benefit from, Queensland’s growing economy through increased employment, labour force participation, career development, and home and business ownership.

The Framework was designed to focus Queensland Government resources and harness other inputs from the Australian Government and local governments, business, industry and non-government organisations (NGOs) towards the increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Queensland economy.



## The Framework sets three priorities:

- 1. Individual responsibility and opportunity:** Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build their capabilities, including through educational attainment, taking up and retaining employment and running businesses successfully.
- 2. Unlocking economic potential:** Enable economic opportunities by removing barriers to economic development and by supporting business growth.
- 3. Contributing to the economy:** Facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributing to the four pillar industries and the broader Queensland economy, through partnerships, employment and business growth.

## The Queensland Plan

In 2013, all Queenslanders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were asked about their 30 year vision for Queensland. Their views and aspirations have been compiled by the Queensland Government, on behalf of the people of Queensland into *The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland*—our working draft (*The draft Queensland Plan*).

The community said it wanted a Queensland where “no one gets left behind,” that diversity is celebrated, embraced and respected and that education is a lifelong experience.

The actions within *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Action Plan* (the Action Plan) are also an important step towards achieving the draft Queensland Plan outcome that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation matches that of non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

## Context

The Framework identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lower levels of educational attainment, employment, and business and home ownership compared to non-Indigenous Australians. The greatest opportunity to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is to increase their economic participation.

This Action Plan seeks to address barriers and take advantage of opportunities to increase economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Queensland. Each of the actions seek to utilise government investment, existing business opportunities and other opportunities that need to be developed to increase employment and business development.

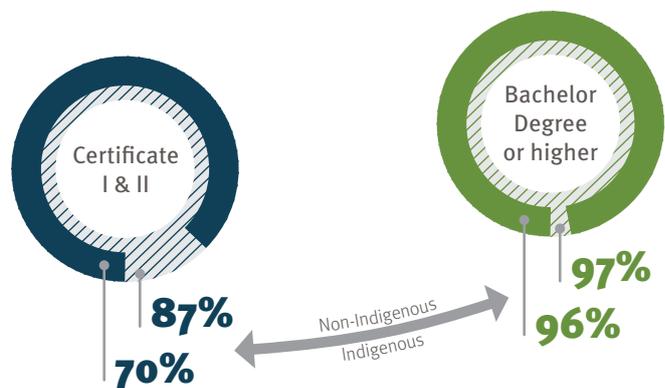
Those living in discrete Indigenous communities face additional barriers to economic participation particular to remote areas where there is minimal or no industry presence or private sector investment, and long-standing land tenure issues which to date have limited business and home ownership. Government investment in infrastructure, housing and service delivery, provides real opportunities for employment and business development in remote communities.

To access employment, training and education opportunities outside of remote communities, assistance may be needed to overcome barriers such as low-levels of drivers licensing, birth certification, and access to employment-related housing.

The majority (81 per cent ) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders live in urban and regional areas. Despite being close to hubs of industrial and commercial activity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in urban and regional areas is substantially lower than non-Indigenous people. Poor health, lower skills and education levels, as well as contact with the criminal justice system are identified as factors that reduce an individual's capability to obtain employment.

While there are complex links between various factors of social and economic disadvantage, the Framework identifies that irrespective of urban, regional or remote setting, educational attainment is the single most important factor to gaining employment.

*Higher education  
and employment  
outcomes*



Source: derived from Census 2011

# The Action Plan

---

This Action Plan outlines how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders will be supported to participate in employment and business ownership in partnership with the Queensland Government and other stakeholders and has been developed in consideration of the three priorities in the Framework.

---

It sets out areas where the State Government can work with other levels of government, non-government organisations, the private sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to improve economic participation through employment and business opportunities.

The Action Plan is based on four guiding principles:

- respect and cultural recognition
- education enables choice
- working together
- responsibility and opportunity.

The Action Plan sets out four areas of action, based on evidence of what works to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the real economy:

- **Action Area 1:** Individual capacity
- **Action Area 2:** Direct employment
- **Action Area 3:** Government infrastructure, services and policy
- **Action Area 4:** Private and other sector business and partnerships.

Consistent with the Framework's underlying principle that education enables choice, the Action Plan contains a number of actions aimed at enhancing opportunities for education and training. This includes the establishment of a new Indigenous Vocational Education Partnership which will provide \$4 million over four years to complement existing education and training services by funding strategic interventions which cannot be met through other programs.

The Indigenous Vocational Education Partnership will draw together and build upon a range of actions under this Action Plan by funding additional accredited training and assessment services that give Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people training connected to real jobs.

## Assessment of outcomes

The State Government invests substantial resources in providing education and training, health, housing, justice, social programs and business opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. To achieve the best outcome from this investment we will continue to identify, assess and qualify the policies and programs we deliver across government to ensure programs, services, policy and funding are:

- appropriate to community needs and priorities
- current and effective
- fit for purpose
- present a return on investment.

This process will involve a continuing review of existing policies, programs and funding across Queensland Government agencies and will become a litmus test for future initiatives.

The importance of this process for the Framework and this Action Plan is to ensure there is engagement, opportunity and continuity in employment and business for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across the state. The greatest community benefit will only be realised if all parties involved commit to continual review, assessment and improvement.

Actions will also support greater communication and alignment with the Federal Government and other agencies in respect of COAG and other partnership service delivery to ensure alignment with this Action Plan.

## Governance

The Action Plan's implementation will be over sighted by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier through the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The Cabinet Committee will be supported by the Senior Officers' Group comprising senior government officers from all State Government agencies. Regional Managers' Coordination Networks and whole-of-government groups will oversee the actions at a local level.

## Action Area 1: Individual capacity

**Increasing educational attainment levels** with an emphasis on motivation and resilience is vital to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and business ownership. An individual's employment prospects, including job retention and career success, increase with the acquisition of in-demand skills and by matching an individual's aspirations and capabilities to a career profile.

Comprehensive primary and secondary education sets the foundation for future skills development and pathways into further education and vocational education and training linked to employment opportunities.

Actions in this area will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take up employment opportunities by providing targeted and relevant education and training that lead to real jobs.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and stakeholders have identified practical barriers to employment such as drivers' licensing, preparation of job applications, interview techniques and employment strategies.

Actions in this area will address these issues as well as other barriers to employment including housing support to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take up employment opportunities.

*“Education is the key for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Education supports self-determination, the ability to strive to achieve your goals and most importantly make a difference in the community.”*

*Matthew Prior | Law student working with Queensland South Native Title Services.*

## Action Area 2: Direct employment

To increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **employment** there is a need to **link employers and industry** to a largely untapped labour force. Actions will focus on working with employers and industry to identify employment opportunities and link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to those opportunities.

Services such as health, education and disability services can be undertaken and delivered by more Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, leading to more responsive and cost effective services particularly in remote areas.

The rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) from 2016 and growth in the delivery of primary health care will offer significant employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and service delivery opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NGOs.

Poor job retention has also had a significant impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. Mentoring and supportive workplaces are likely to increase participation and job retention for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

“*Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health and community services is a win-win for everyone. Our communities, organisations and individuals all benefit from not only the direct employment but also through improved services, culturally appropriate delivery and the diversity in our workplaces. As the largest growing industry in Queensland, health and community services has jobs at all levels and in many different roles providing opportunities for new entrants and career pathways.*”

*Laura Barnes | Executive Director, Health and Community Services Workforce Council.*

## Action Area 3: Government infrastructure, services and policy

The **provision of infrastructure** and the **delivery of services** by the Queensland Government to Indigenous communities represent a significant opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote, regional and urban areas to participate in the real economy.

This is especially the case in remote communities which may not be in close proximity to employment opportunities provided by large centres of population or industry.

Given its proportionally large investment in rural and regional Queensland, all levels of government can greatly influence economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and unlock significant economic potential.

The provision of infrastructure, and the procurement and delivery of services by government offer great employment and business development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This is especially the case in remote areas. Government policy settings can also drive greater levels of economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Infrastructure such as housing, roads, water, power, other utilities and service buildings must be constructed and maintained. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are making a significant contribution to Queensland through employment in construction and maintenance of government business and infrastructure. E.g: construction of social houses, maintenance of social houses and government buildings. This contribution will be increased significantly under this element enabling Indigenous people to shift from contributors to providers.

Services such as health, education, justice, disability and social services can be undertaken and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, leading to more responsive and cost effective services particularly in remote areas.

Land tenure also underpins economic potential. Actions in this area will develop home and land ownership opportunities resulting from the Queensland Government's commitment to allow remote Aboriginal communities to transition township areas to freehold tenure. Home ownership allows people to establish and grow a capital base from which they can leverage future economic opportunity.

Transfer of some Cape York lands to Aboriginal Freehold and National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) creates business opportunities currently not available on these lands.

Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation can be achieved by changing the way government develops and delivers infrastructure and procures services. By changing government policy, economic value can be unlocked.

## Action Area 4: Private and other sector business and partnerships

There is a growing need and desire for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to **own and run businesses across Queensland.**

The three keys to success are easy entry by way of red tape reduction, developing business skills and initial support. Simply managing a business that employs Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people does not necessarily develop skills or foster motivation.

This action area will involve building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business ownership and success by providing support for existing businesses, joint venture partnerships and collaboration with larger businesses and NGOs.

*“ In 2044, Queensland will be the strongest, most diverse economy in Australia, and a key player in the Asian region.*

*Our regions will be central to our economic prosperity, converting their unique strengths into opportunities that drive and sustain growth.*

*Greater productivity and prosperity means everyone will enjoy a high standard of living. Unemployment will be at a record low, and our workforce will be inclusive, making the most of what all Queenslanders have to offer.* ”

*Source: The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland—our working draft.*

# Actions

## Key

The actions are identified by 3 target areas:

**State wide**



**Regional**



**Remote**



## Action Area 1: Individual capacity

### WHAT WE WILL DO

### TARGET AREA LEAD AGENCY

Provide \$1 million per financial year to 2016–17 to support a new Indigenous Vocational Education Partnership.



Department of Education,  
Training and Employment

Launch Solid Pathways pilot – a partnership with the University of Queensland to support high achieving Indigenous students reach their full potential.



Department of Education,  
Training and Employment

Continue the Year 12 Destinations initiative, under *Solid partners Solid futures* which focuses on assisting Year 12 students to transition into further education, training or employment, and expanding the individual case management of students from six months to 12 months post-Year 12. *Solid partners Solid futures* will build a continuous pathway to ensure children and young people are supported and engaged in learning from early childhood education and care through to schooling, training, tertiary education and employment.



Department of Education,  
Training and Employment

Implement *Great skills. Real opportunities.* an action plan for further education and training to support Queenslanders to access and complete the skills training they need to get a job and contribute to the state’s economy and their own prosperity and create an additional 10,000 apprenticeships in six years to assist Queenslanders, including Indigenous Queenslanders into further education, training and employment



Department of Education,  
Training and Employment

Implement strategies that increase Certificate I to Advanced Diploma qualification completions by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and provide concessional arrangements for qualifications under the new VET Investment Framework including the Certificate 3 Guarantee program.



*Department of Education,  
Training and Employment*

Pilot a new approach to obtaining a Learner and Provisional drivers' license in Indigenous communities through AustRoads trial by 2015.



*Department of Transport  
and Main Roads*

Develop and implement a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NDIS Workforce Strategy that builds the skills of existing and new workers; and attracts, recruits and retains staff, including people with disability.



*Department of  
Communities, Child  
Safety and Disability  
Services*

Support Indigenous community members to deliver practical driver training programs by developing and implementing initiatives to increase Indigenous community capacity and knowledge of the licensing system.



*Department of Transport  
and Main Roads*

Deliver, in partnership with Australian Government, professional development activities for Indigenous artists in Indigenous Art Centres (IACs).



*Department of Science,  
Information Technology,  
Innovation and the Arts*

Increase the birth registrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through community awareness strategies and identifying barriers to registration as part of the review of the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003*.



*Department of Justice and  
Attorney-General*

## Action Area 2: Direct employment

### WHAT WE WILL DO

### TARGET AREA LEAD AGENCY

Partner with companies in the four pillar industries and broader economy to increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Provide 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobs through the roll out of social housing construction, maintenance and infrastructure development.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Employ an additional 40 Indigenous Rangers, bringing the total number to 80 by 2015.



*Department of Environment and Heritage Protection*

Deliver employment focused initiatives such as Backing Indigenous Arts 2014–15 program:

- Building Skills and Opportunities
- Indigenous Art Centres
- Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2014
- Indigenous Performance (festivals and touring)
- International Arts Partnership Program.



*Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts*

Engage employers in the development and monitoring of student employment programs ensuring the employment opportunities are relevant to the market.



*Department of Education, Training and Employment*

Provide employment related accommodation to remove housing as a barrier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders from remote communities to access employment, education and training opportunities in regional locations experiencing increased economic growth and employment.



*Department of Housing and Public Works*

WHAT WE WILL DO

TARGET AREA LEAD AGENCY

---

Develop the capacity and capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and non-government organisations to compete for new business opportunities, by developing tools and resources specifically tailored to the needs of community sector organisations.



*Department of  
Communities, Child  
Safety and Disability  
Services*

---

Develop a model and work with remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify strategies to support sustainable service delivery for people with disability.



*Department of  
Communities, Child  
Safety and Disability  
Services*

---

Support employment placements through Myuma Pty Ltd to provide accredited, industry based training and employment support in mining and construction to young people from Aurukun, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge, Coen, Doomadgee and Mornington Island.



*Department of Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander  
and Multicultural Affairs*

---

## Action Area 3: Government infrastructure, services and policy

### WHAT WE WILL DO

### TARGET AREA LEAD AGENCY

Establish greater continuity in programming construction and infrastructure projects in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to increase skills development locally.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Implement the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy for construction and civil works projects in discrete communities, to ensure local involvement in employment and training is realised.



*Department of Education, Training and Employment*

Ensure appropriate construction and civil works projects outside of discrete communities are declared Indigenous projects and provide training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Provide \$75,000 for selected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to trial the provision of freehold land in their communities.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

*Department of Natural Resources and Mines*

Work with discrete Aboriginal communities to assist them in transition of township areas to freehold tenure, to allow for home ownership.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Assist individuals and families to access home ownership in discrete Aboriginal communities through the Home Ownership Team.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Resolve land tenure issues in Deed of Trust communities by:

- providing the options for ordinary freehold
- transferring land to trustees under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and the *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991*
- reducing the regulatory burden by streamlining leasing arrangements and resolving legacy tenure anomalies
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils to produce their first planning schemes.



*Department of Natural Resources and Mines*

*Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning*

---

Leverage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement and employment opportunities through government procurement processes.



*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

---

## Action Area 4: Private and other sector business and partnerships

### WHAT WE WILL DO

### TARGET AREA LEAD AGENCY

Identify high growth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses for the Mentoring for Growth program and also work with potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors who may be able to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses as part of the program. Mentoring for Growth assists enterprises that are in high or rapid growth mode by providing access to a panel of business mentors who can help to address commercial challenges.



*Department of Tourism,  
Major Events, Small  
Business and the  
Commonwealth Games*

Build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments to become principal contractors for the roll out of social housing under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) program and other housing programs and government infrastructure.



*Department of Housing  
and Public Works*

Develop industry partnerships to showcase the work of Indigenous artists and offer cultural tourists an authentic experience. This aligns with actions under Destination Success, a 20-year plan for Queensland's tourism industry.



*Department of Science,  
Information Technology,  
Innovation and the Arts*

Investigate the feasibility and desirability of establishing and implementing a planning hub to assist Indigenous Councils and Native Title Prescribed Body Corporates to address land use planning and tenure matters.



*Department of Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander  
and Multicultural Affairs*

Identify opportunities to expand the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program, which aims to improve Indigenous participation in managing land and sea country, through partnerships with industry and explore employment and business development opportunities.



*Department of  
Environment and  
Heritage Protection*

WHAT WE WILL DO

TARGET AREA LEAD AGENCY

---

Continue to develop the Black Business finder online web resource and work in partnership with the Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning to provide business development opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.



*Department of Education,  
Training and Employment*

---

Following the transfer (in July 2014) of primary health care services in Yarrabah from the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service to the Aboriginal health service Gurriny Yealamucka, work with providers over financial year 2014–15 to extend the community-controlled service delivery model to Cape York, in accordance with the Cape York Regional Health Forum Deed of Commitment, 2006.



*Department of Health*

---

**Copyright**

© The State of Queensland (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs) July 2014. Copyright protects this publication. Excerpts may be reproduced with acknowledgement of the State of Queensland (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs).

**License**

This document is licensed by the State of Queensland (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs) under a Creative Attribution (CC BY) 3.0 Australian license.

*CC BY License Summary Statement: In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and adapt the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Action Plan, as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs).*

To view a copy of this license, visit: [www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en).

**Disclaimer**

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

The information in this publication is general and does not take into account individual circumstances or situations.

**Respect for deceased people and culture**

While every effort has been made to respect cultural traditions, readers are advised this publication may contain names and images of people who are deceased.

All reasonable measures have been taken to ensure that information contained in this document is accurate, including histories, traditional names and pronunciations.

