



**FIRST PEOPLES  
HEART**

## **IN RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

We seek to develop a more just narrative with our indigenous brothers and sisters.

As First and Second Peoples, we seek to journey together, creating socially just and equitable relationships, listening to and learning from one another.

## OUR HOPES

- Self-determination that gives First Peoples full control over decisions impacting their lives and communities.
- Significant and consistent resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community health and wellbeing services, designed to achieve a closing of the gap in health, mental health and social outcomes.
- High rates of early childhood education, school attendance and completion among Indigenous students supported by sufficient professional resourcing and educational opportunities.
- Indigenous languages to be preserved, taught and incorporated into civic functions. True bilingual education to become a reality for Indigenous communities.
- Indigenous cultures to be explored, acknowledged and celebrated by all Australians.

## A BIBLICAL MANDATE

- We begin from the starting point that all humans are made in the image of God and are thus to be equally respected, included and supported in society (Genesis 1:26-27).
- The teaching of the prophets consistently links faithfulness to God with a willingness to care for those members of society who are on the margins or have been treated unjustly.  
See for example Isaiah 58:1-11;  
Amos 2:6-7; 4:1-5; 5:10-15, 21-24.
- Jesus' example of ministry and his teaching point us to a focus on showing kindness and compassion to those marginalised by society (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus described his call to ministry as one which was bound up with proclaiming good news for the poor and oppressed (Luke 4:16-19), and he taught that our response to those in need represents a response to Christ himself (Matthew 25:31-46).
- The New Testament Epistles describe a community without distinctions (Galatians 3:28) and give Christians the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18) and of pursuing peace with everyone (Hebrews 12:14).

- In the light of these biblical principles, CSA sees that the single area within Australian society where there is the keenest need for reconciliation and peace-making, where people have been dispossessed and continue to be marginalised, where there is a need for respect and the recognition of the presence of God, is in our relationship and heart for the First Peoples of this country

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The final scene in the Biblical story is a vision of shalom. It is a picture of relational and cultural flourishing. People from very tribe and tongue gather in reconciled community, in a complete reversal of the fractured relationships that occurred through the fall (Revelation 7:9; 21:1-5; 22:1-5). It represents a culmination of the whole narrative of scripture, where God is reconciling the world to himself, and inviting his people to join with him in seeking justice and establishing peace in their present contexts.

Jesus inaugurated a Kingdom where all people, irrespective of race, colour or background, would be equally loved and valued. This Kingdom would be marked by compassion, justice, forgiveness, peace and self-giving love. At Jesus' ascension, the responsibility of embodying this Kingdom passed on to all those who would choose to follow him. Empowered by His Spirit, we are called to offer our world a glimpse of God's future in our present world (John 20:21-22).

## FOR DISCUSSION

- What difference does it make to view all people as being made in the image of God?
- What are the main related issues in education for our indigenous people?
- What are some ways that our school can explore and try better to understand indigenous culture?
- How might our school play a role in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?