



Media Release

Thursday 31 August 2023

Celebrating Blak Excellence in the Townsville Diocese

This afternoon, a special celebration will take place at The Ville Resort-Casino celebrating over 120 Indigenous students from across the Townsville Diocese who will graduate Year 12 this year.

Blak Excellence is an aspirational afternoon and a celebration of our Indigenous students in the Townsville Diocese who are making a positive impact in their communities and school.

The event will be hosted by the Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme, which is a federally funded project facilitated by Townsville Catholic Education (TCE). It is TCE's largest Indigenous Education Initiative, and one that continues to receive excellent outcomes.

Special guests have been invited to the event to share their stories, and pathways to success, providing advice to students as they are about to embark on their post-school journeys.

This afternoon will include keynote speeches from Aunty Sandra Creamer AM, Kenny Bedford and Bujimulla Yanner and will be hosted by our MC, Tristan Nelliman-Adams.

Aunty Sandra Creamer AM	Wannyi/Kalkadoon woman, Solicitor & Adjunct Professor in Public Health. Her areas of work are researching climate change in Australia and rights to Indigenous peoples and women around the globe. Her current role is the chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council to inform the development of the next National Plan to end family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, and to support the implementation of the Closing of the Gap Target 13. Sandra is on the advisory team for the Commissioner of the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland and also has her own consulting firm.
Kenny Bedford	Kenny is from the Meruam Tribe of Erub, Torres Strait. Apart from having his own Consultancy business, Kenny is committed to the Yes23 Campaign for the upcoming Referendum and was the Co-Convenor for the Thursday Island Referendum Council Dialogue.
Bujimulla Yanner	Bujimulla is a Law Grad at international engineering firm Arup where he has been for the last 5 years. He is a proud Gangalidda man from Mougibi (Burketown) in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Since the commencement of the Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme, over 3500 students have been invested in achieving academic growth and increasing their personal engagement levels.

"Townsville Catholic Education values and supports wholeheartedly the incredible work the Indigenous Education Team does within our system and the equally impactful work that our schools do to ensure our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in our schools have every opportunity to flourish and

become tomorrow's leaders," said Tammi Webber, Systems Learning and Teaching Adviser- Indigenous Education, Townsville Catholic Education.

"The main message that our Year 12 graduates can take away from this event is that they are Blak Excellence, they are our future elders, and the keepers of our culture. Not only surviving but thriving in a modern world. And we can't wait to see what you go on and do in your lives!"

The program encourages student attendance, academic improvement and engagement, with students moving through incentives stages each year based on their completion of criteria under the pillars of attendance, academic achievement and engagement. It has received excellent support from secondary Catholic school students and staff.

"The Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme sets high expectations of our Indigenous students and families whilst rewarding and promoting a culture of high attendance, academic improvement and students fully engaged in their schooling," Tammi said.

Event details:

Date: Thursday 31 August

Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Location: The Pavilion, The Ville

(Schools in the Emerging Leaders Incentive Program: St Margaret Mary's College, Hyde Park; Southern Cross Catholic College, Annandale; St Anthony's Catholic College, Deeragun; Ryan Catholic College, Kirwan; Gilroy Santa Maria College, Ingham; Burdekin Catholic High School, Ayr; St Catherine's Catholic College, The Whitsunday; Columba Catholic College, Charters Towers; Good Shepherd Catholic College, Mount Isa; St Joseph's Catholic school, Cloncurry; St Teresa's College, Abergowrie)

**Blak is a term which is used to distinguish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity from skin colour. It is also an expression of self-determination.*

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Marketing contact:

Karolien Kern, Senior Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Townsville Catholic Education

P: 0417 227 049 | E: kkern@tsv.catholic.edu.au