**QATSIETAC Chair**

Hello. I’m Leon Epong, a Mamu man from Innisfail and Chair of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee.

I am pleased to see strong commitments being made by the Department of Education to meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

The Department of Education is seeking to create an environment in which it is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, students, staff members and communities to learn and participate.

In consultation with the Committee, the department is utilising a model that empowers Indigenous communities to make decisions at a local level to accelerate educational outcomes.

We have a shared commitment through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to progress much needed reforms, addressing disadvantage through education.

Jointly, we are on this journey of transformation and respect. I hope we can continue to build on the strengths of culture and identity as foundations for a more confident, progressive and successful education system securing positive futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.